

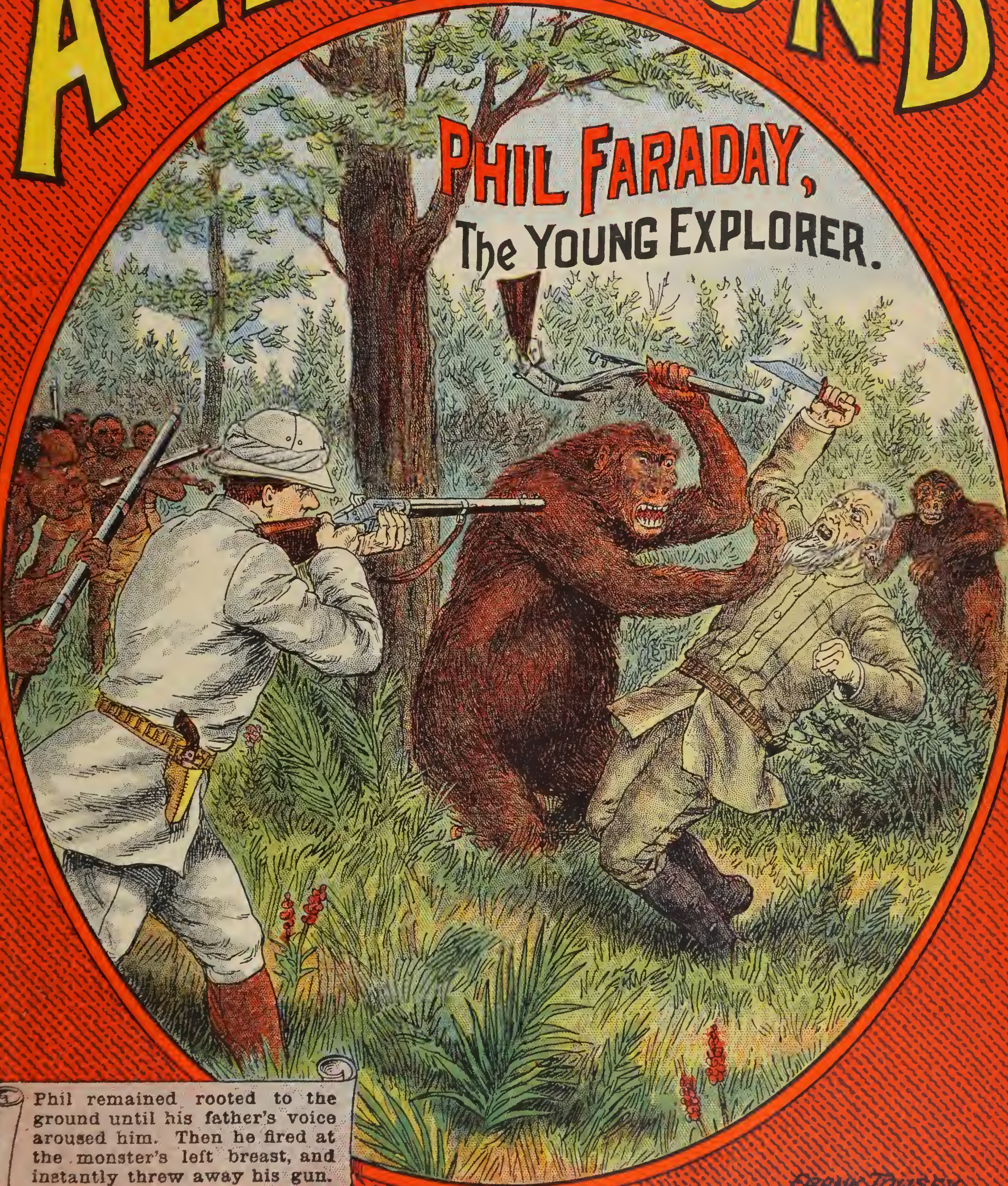
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ALL AROUND

PHIL FARADAY,
The YOUNG EXPLORER.



Phil remained rooted to the ground until his father's voice aroused him. Then he fired at the monster's left breast, and instantly threw away his gun.

WEEKLY.

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ALL AROUND WEEKLY

CONTAINING STORIES OF ALL KINDS

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PHIL FARADAY, THE YOUNG EXPLORER

OR,

ADVENTURES IN SAVAGE AFRICA

By Ed. KING

CHAPTER I.

A GORILLA HUNT AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

In the dim twilight of an African forest—so thick and impenetrable as to exclude the dazzling rays of the sun—stood a group of men in various attitudes, more or less picturesque, but all intent in listening, a fact not difficult, seeing that the silence here can only be equaled above the clouds or on the bosom of a becalmed ocean at night.

They were all black except two—a stalwart, sallow-faced man, prematurely aged from the ravages of climate, and a youth, not more than eighteen, but with the gravity and self-possession of a man at home in these unknown wilds.

To the rear of these two were their attendants, or followers—natives from the Gaboon River, and the most civilized kind of the African genus homo.

"It was a false alarm, father," said the youth, in a calm, low voice, which at once evinced the self-command and thoughtful deliberation of an older man. "We have struck the gorilla track but scared them somehow."

"Well, Phil, maybe you're right—your ears are sharper than mine; a man loses the acuteness of hearing and sharpness of eyesight after a few years of coast fever."

So saying, the hunter let the stock of his gun fall slowly to the ground, and rested with his hand on the muzzle.

"Damn their skins, they're more'n half human, them critters, Phil," he went on, with an accent that a lifetime spent in Africa could not kill.

"Human or not, I'm never going to give in now till I've killed my first gorilla."

"No more you shall, my son. That's what we've come out for."

"Massa Faraday, sir," said one of the dusky followers, approaching, "dey is another track, for sure—come see."

"We will follow this one," answered Phil, steadily, in the M'pongwe tongue; "it is fresh. Tell your men to separate, Tokio, so that if we come upon a nest we shall surround it."

Tokio retired a few paces, spoke to his companions, who, with the stealth and caution of an American Indian on the war path, dived into the thicket and in a few minutes were out of sight of the Faradays.

Hunting this semi-human monster is no light undertaking. The ferocious nature of the brute is only equaled by its inconceivable strength.

The natives of the gorilla country fear these creatures with all the horror of religious superstition, believing that their bodies contain the spirits of departed fetich or medicine men.

The stories they tell of the gorilla would outdo the most horrible ghost story ever invented by the fertile mind of man, and our hero, Phil, had first conceived his unquenchable longing to meet the "tailed man" of the forests from hearing those wild legends.

Scarcely more than exchanging a whispered word at times, father and son forced their way on through this pathless woodland for hour after hour.

Faraday, growing tired, was about to halt, when Tokio slipped noiselessly up and gave a signal that was full of significance and warning.

It was a peculiar cluck made by the tongue.

Phil laid his hand on his father's arm. They stood still, and so intense was the silence, that a slowly drawn breath sounded like a moan, and the beating of their hearts made the noise of muffled drums.

In a few minutes the stillness was broken by a noise as of men tearing down branches of trees and breaking through the bush which made travel so painfully tedious here.

It was now that the natives, with the exception of two, began to hang back. They were not cowards, but could not overcome their superstitious awe.

Phil and his father went cautiously forward, Faraday, in his eagerness to get at his prey, taking the lead.

Presently the sounds already described increased, the bushes were thrust furiously aside, and up rose a creature so hideous—so monstrous and terrible, as to cause even the old hunter to halt, thrilled to the heart.

They were confronted by an enormous gorilla. It was six feet high when it stood up on its short and ill-shapen hind legs.

Its body was that of a giant, as were its arms. It had an immense paunch, and hands that looked capable of crushing solid iron as we would an egg.

Not the slightest sign of fear did it evince, but on the contrary, looked the party full in the face for fully a minute, then it began to furiously beat its breast with its huge hands, and uttered a well-defined, sharp bark, like the yelp of a bloodhound.

The bark was immediately followed by a roar—loud, prolonged, and reverberating as the roar of a lion, and it took a few paces forward.

All this time Phil had stood transfixed. For the first time he beheld this comparatively unknown monster in all its native and awful grandeur.

Its eyes flashed, and the tuft of short hair on the low forehead worked up and down rapidly, while its dreadful fangs, fully displayed, gave it the appearance of some horrible ghoul never seen in the worst kind of nightmare.

"Let me have a shot, father," said Phil, raising his rifle.

"Look, more—more here!" cried Tokio, and sure enough, to the rear was the female and family of this monster, whose instinct had led him to come forward in their defense.

At the moment Tokio called out the gorilla rushed forward, flinging its arms in the air and still beating its breast.

They were at such terribly close quarters that Faraday, not daring to move, was forced to fire.

Better had he retreated, for the brute struck the muzzle of the gun and tore it out of his hands.

The bullet only caused a flesh wound which maddened the monster, and before any one could interfere the gun was broken—the barrel twisted like a leaden corkscrew.

Faraday lost his presence of mind. He could not move, and drew his knife, intending to close.

One sledgehammer-like blow—a curious back-handed blow of the gorilla's—battered in his breast bone, and his legs sunk from under him.

"Fire, Phil!" he gasped. "Don't mind me—go on over!"

Phil had remained rooted to the ground, until his father's voice aroused him.

He fired point blank at the monster's left breast, and that being his only shot, he threw his gun away, and with a wild cry threw himself upon the hairy giant and drove his knife in his breast to the hilt.

At the same time he called out in the native tongue to his men:

"Fire on the others—fire!"

The female, seeing her protector fall, was leaping toward him, quite as terrible, though not as large as the animal brute weltering in its blood beside the dying hunter.

CHAPTER II.

SURROUNDED BY FOES.

"Father!" cried Phil, wildly snatching the gun from Tokio, and dashing on toward the female gorilla.

For a few moments a perfect frenzy seized him, and when he had helped shoot down the wretched mother, he drew his revolver and slew the young.

Even then he seemed unpacified until the voice of Tokio recalled him.

In an instant he was on his knees beside his father.

Faraday breathed, but was still unconscious; Phil could do nothing much here, so he ordered the natives to make a litter and carry his father back to where they had camped on the previous night on the bank of a stream—an arm of one of the numerous sluggish rivers that inclose Western Africa.

The M'pongwe had been reared at the "factory" belonging to Mr. Faraday, and loved their master.

They carried him rapidly back, and yet without shaking him, and then under the shelter of the trees, laid upon blankets, Faraday received all the aid that a loving, only son could give him.

Phil was not the only one that wept. The ten followers stood around in a sorrowful circle and cried like babies—though without noise.

But a distraction came. The noise of breaking twigs and rustling branches—so terribly like the noise made by the accursed gorilla, that Phil leaped to his feet, snatched up his rifle, with his eyes flashing fire through the tear drops that were in them.

The natives looked from one to another, and crouched behind trees or threw themselves down, with their rifles at their shoulders.

No gorilla appeared; but half a dozen black faces peered through the brush, disappeared quickly and then Phil heard the shout in the M'pongwe tongue:

"Friends! Friends!"

He lowered his rifle and called his men around him. The sequel to this alarm took his breath away.

Two young men in hunting dress—one with a black mustache and imperial, the other larger of build, fair, and with a blond mustache—both apparently midway between twenty and thirty years of age.

The one with the black mustache uttered a joyful exclamation, and when he spoke it was with an accent that at once proclaimed him French.

"Ah, my friend Faraday, what has happened?" he cried. "What good fortune is this that brings us together—let me, *mon cher*—my English friend, Doctor Temple, late assistant army surgeon."

"You are a doctor, sir?" cried Phil, eagerly.

"Something of that sort of thing, you know. Awfully glad to meet you, Mr. Faraday," answered Temple, lazily. "We came across a gorilla massacre. Wonder why they were left behind?"

"That is why," and Phil pointed to the rude invalid couch which had not yet been perceived by the newcomers.

"Ah, *mon Dieu—mon Dieu!*" cried the young Frenchman, Gascon D'Albert by name, "it is your father."

A few long and rapid strides and Temple was kneeling by the wounded man. From one of his capacious pockets he took a roll of lint, from another a case of surgical instruments, and then he called his black servant to bring his knapsack.

From this he took a little medicine chest and kept it open by his side. There was no haste, yet not the fraction of a minute was lost.

For fully half an hour Phil stood, his hand clasped in that of his friend, D'Albert.

Faraday recovered consciousness. He opened his eyes, smiled faintly, groaned an instant after and fell into a lethargy that did not deceive Temple in the guise of sleep.

He arose slowly, and, taking his hand, led Phil aside.

"My friend, your father's injuries are, I fear, fatal; they are internal. His chest is crushed and three ribs broken; he bleeds internally. Tell me the nearest village."

"Two days' canoe journey."

"He ought not to be moved, but if you feel that more can be done for him, we will——"

"No—no, doctor, I feared it was all over. Oh, you should have heard the dreadful sound of that terrible blow. No, you are here. We will camp, and if he gets better we will return to the Gaboon River. I leave all in your hands, doctor—all."

"Then I must have a tent rigged over him at once, and a raised bed. Let us hope."

The little camp on the banks of the stream was silent under the fading sky.

The native followers spoke in whispers, and cast fearful glances at the one carefully erected tent, around which Faraday's followers sat with bowed heads, inside which stood the three young men by the bedside of the dying man.

He was quite conscious now and out of pain, but sinking fast.

"I am glad I was not killed outright," he said, "and that you are here, doctor, for I wanted to say a word to my dear boy. You don't know it, but he was bred and born on the Gaboon River, under the shadow of the French fort. That's where we met Gaseon. My dear wife lays in the garden of my 'factory.' She couldn't stand against the climate, and she faded so quick that she'd passed away before I could shift her. I want to be with her; it is a long journey, but you'll not leave me here, Phil?"

"No—no, father."

"Well—well, you know what I said when she went: 'It's no use going home to the States now, Phil. I'll settle out here for your sake, 'cause you can stand the climate;'

and we did settle, and you know, too, I said then, Phil—it was in '53—'only find a place for Darby, by the side of faithful, loving Joan.' I said it, Phil;" a simple little bit of pathos that Phil did not feel or understand then; he did now.

"Phil," he said, "I've done my duty, lad, in my way. P'raps if it hadn't been for you I should have explored further inland for the good of the people and in the cause of knowledge. You've been at me to do it since you've been fifteen, but I wanted you to get older first and a man. I don't ask you to stay by the 'factory,' your heart ain't in it. You can leave it in good hands, my son, and if explore you must, why do it thoroughly. Don't take on; I'm ready to go, and better a hunter's death in the chase than slow rot. 'Twas to be. My property is yours, lad; you'll find my papers all in good order and the property easy to your hand. 'Tain't a fortune, but you might make one out of it. Kiss me, my son, and don't forget Darby and Joan; let 'em lie together, side by side."

"I promise that, my dear father, solemnly. I swear to obey your wish."

"And we solemnly swear to help him," said Temple; "never to leave him till he is safe at the factory on the Gaboon."

Quietly, peacefully poor Faraday passed away—a smile was on his lips when his face lighted up, and he said, quite audibly:

"Joan—coming." The smile settled and the hand relaxed its hold upon our hero's fingers, who felt alone in the world, indeed, then.

Two hours later and Temple laid his hand on Phil's shoulder and broached a painful subject with great delicacy.

"My dear friend," he said, gently, "to obey your father's last command you must have a receptacle made for him, and I will do my best to embalm the body. Remember the terrible journey to the coast."

"I will leave it to you, doctor."

A coffin was roughly hewn from an adjacent tree, and the body, bound up and embalmed, was encased, the coffin being bound up in the canvas that had formed the tent, and the sorrowful party started on their pilgrimage.

Lieutenant Gaseon and the young doctor had over thirty natives with them, carrying large and useful supplies.

It was fortunate that they were so strong in numbers, for at nearly every stage of the journey they met with opposition from the people, who would not believe that the white men possessed anything but treasure in that oblong package which was handled with such care.

"We shall come to grief soon," said Phil, when they had deserted their canoes to enter a dark forest—a near cut to the river Aderi, or Volta.

"I hope not," answered Temple, gravely.

"We have come so far at the cost of nearly all your trading materials. How we shall manage now, I don't know. These parts are overrun with the Portuguese slave traders and the banditti, who form part of the tribes of Dahomey."

"We must cut our way through all opposition. That is the reason I oppose giving up any powder," answered Temple.

They felt that it was a sacred duty to convey that sacred receptacle and its dead from this savage land. A short

rest and the gloomy forest is entered. The three young men are carried each in a separate hammock slung on poles.

The body of the dead explorer was sent to the coast by carriers and reaching a seaport, was sent home for interment.

They find the forest almost dark, and Gascon finds the "luxury" of African travel fading.

The negroes set up a yelling and howling so appallingly hideous, that Gascon placed his hands on the poles of his hammock, and stared about him.

"Mon Dieu!" he called. "What is this?"

"Custom of the country," replied Phil, with a sad smile. "They keep up this infernal din to drive away evil spirits."

Gascon stuffed his fingers in his ears and groaned. Phil and Temple were silent.

CHAPTER III.

A VISIT TO DAHOMEY—HUMAN SACRIFICE.

They had passed through some villages. Of course there were delays at each of them, but not long ones.

The explorers wanted to hurry through these "civilized" parts of Africa and explore virgin soil.

"We will hurry through Dahomey," Phil said, "and Gascon, don't fall in love there."

"Ah, my dear comrade, don't worry about me; the Ashantees are not as strict as is the law of Dahomey. There it is death, which, even when a heavy fine is paid, is only mitigated to slavery for life."

"Yes, and they would kill a white man without compunction," remarked Temple. "They are a warlike people. Their traffic is war."

"Naturally, since her wealth lies in her slaves, and when even the women are warriors."

"Ugh!" grunted Gascon. "Fancy what they must be like."

"Far more hideous than the men," answered Phil. "I wonder if we should have the pleasure—save the mark—of seeing the Siquiahi."

"What is that?" asked Gascon.

"A ceremony—a religious one. It means watering of the graves of the ancestors. It sounds innocent, but when I tell you that the 'watering' is done with blood you will see the satire."

Gascon shuddered.

"It's true," Temple put in. "The English have sent out missionaries and ministers, for the matter of that, but cannot stop it."

"And never will, till they are civilized and educated."

"I fear not; after all, it is but a reproduction of the ancient religious customs. The Druids, the Egyptian priests, all tolerated human sacrifices—which reminds me I should like to sacrifice something to eat."

"You English always think of your stomachs," said Gascon.

"Well, we will march further along the river. I will send my steward ahead, and tell him if he finds a village to get some fowls for us," replied Phil, who knew too well the value of such preserved food as they had with them to use it while other could be obtained.

It was night when they camped. Some natives came to visit them from an adjacent village, and to buy tobacco

or rum, or both, which they obtained by promising to supply canoes to cross the river.

To men who did not know something of African travel, being surrounded and criticised and jabbered at while partaking of a frugal supper would have considerably upset their digestion; our friends rather liked the entertainment.

"As we intend to go further into the interior than any white man has yet gone," Phil had said, "we must be niggardly with our trading goods. They must be given only in return for some necessities we may require; where a tribe refuses to let us pass through its country after reasonable gifts, we must fight our way, eh, doc?"

"Yes," replied Temple.

"Ah, I should find a little fighting very charming," sighed Gascon.

"Then we are all agreed—let's shake on it, lieutenant. Give me your hand, doc," and the compact was signed.

"Let me add to this," said Temple, "that we have no individual interests; we are a trinity, and making it a sworn duty that each one study only the interest of the other two is the only way in which we can overcome all obstacles."

"Good, doc."

"Magnificent!" shouted Gascon.

It is only justice to Phil's staunch friends that you should know something more of them.

Temple, though only twenty-five, had already won a first-class diploma as M. D., and had served as assistant surgeon in the army in Africa.

D'Albert was a full lieutenant in the French artillery, and had resided some time at the fort on the Gaboon River, near which our hero was born.

All three young men had ample means and sought—from love of adventure—that excitement and hardship in African exploration that the quiet times in their respective countries denied them. It was a daring scheme with a noble aim. How they succeeded we shall see.

The forced marches; the difficulties facing them at every turn; the quarrels among their men, and privations on their way to the Empire of Dahomey. I will pass over. There is too much to tell, to linger this side of the cannibal country.

On nearing Dahomey a messenger was sent with a present, and an escort in return.

They found the city in great excitement—such excitement as we witness on fete days elsewhere.

They were conveyed to the palaver house, and after waiting some time the king came.

Like all other "civilized" Africans, he was polite and courteous, and spouted sweet lies with the ready aptitude of a man who is reared to it.

When the formal greeting was over, Phil asked the reason the people were in such a state of excitement.

The king answered in two words—two words that made the young explorer's cheek pale.

"Siquiaha Day," he said.

You will remember that means the watering of the graves of their ancestors with human blood.

The king bade the white men rest, sent them palm wine, and a message that he would see them at the Siquiaha.

"Shall we go?" asked Gascon.

"We have come to see Africa as it is; our staying away would not save one of those poor wretches," answered Phil.

"I concur," said Temple, quietly. "It is our duty."

Gascon thought the duty a very horrible one, but remembering their compact—the interests of one being sacrificed to the other two—concealed a grimace, remarking:

"Shall we have to eat the barbarians as a matter of duty, too, when we are among the cannibals? Peste! It seems so."

"Not at all; though we may look on and see others eat them," replied Phil.

Temple laughed.

"Yes," said he, in his lazy way. "You see, Gascon, in this case, we are like the sheriff who looks on while the executioner does his disagreeable work. It is his duty."

This revived the lieutenant's spirits, and he laughed the loudest. Frenchmen are mercurial always. The entrance of the king's messenger, however, prevented any further comments.

"The Siquiahi," he said, and the three explorers arose.

"We are ready," said Phil, quietly.

Outside the house stood their own followers, except a few left to guard their treasures which had already been safely stored.

They were conducted to the center of the market, that is to say, that portion of the city where a market is held.

Here was erected a large platform on which stood tents, umbrellas of various sizes and colors, flags and drapery, giving it rather more the look of a circus performance than a royal gala.

All the king's wives were there, as immobile as ebony statues, and the king himself.

Around the platform and a little distance from it was a parapet about four feet high.

Tobacco and rum for the people—together with "cowrie" for the soldiers—held a prominent place.

Below and outside the parapet gather a concourse of naked savages, clamorous and even jubilant.

On the platform is conspicuous the most ghastly spectacle of all. The poor, ignorant creatures who are the victims of this human sacrifice. The biped animals so soon to be butchered to satisfy the unholy religious fanaticism of the people.

Strange to say, these misguided creatures are as composed as the immobile wives of the king.

Each one, with a white cap on his head, is lashed down in a tiny canoe not large or deep enough to conceal the palpitating bodies from the eager brutes below.

Our hero felt sick and dizzy as he went toward the "grandstand." Gascon almost fainted. The sight of the dissecting room and the battlefield had steeled Temple's nerves, and he looked on unmoved—as did our friends' dusky followers, who mingled with the crowd below, but only as passive spectators.

The ceremonies commenced with the king throwing presents down to the soldiers—who scrambled for them as city gamins do for pennies. Buns and tobacco were distributed—a lull—and then as if the black heathen had not enough, they yelled:

"Feed us, king—feed us; we are hungry—we are hun-

That was the fatal signal. The death warrant of the human sacrifices.

The victims were then carried to the edge of the platform—a howl went up—they were hurled over the edge of the parapet—grasped in the clutches of the "hungry" mob.

Gascon buried his face in his hands; Temple looked on—not unmoved now, but he looked on with the deliberate fortitude of a scientist, while Phil, turning away, shivered all over and gave vent to his feelings in two gasps:

"Oh!—Horror!"

CHAPTER IV.

OFF INTO THE INTERIOR—THROUGH THE WILDERNESS—A DESERTED VILLAGE—THE TORNADO.

The day that closed could not shut out that inhuman scene from the mental vision of our friends.

"I can't stay here," said Phil; "the sight haunts me."

"Ah, mon Dieu—mon Dieu!" cried Gascon; "can there be Christian countries with armies, navies—and men who know this, and do not come forth and wipe these wretches out?"

"Two wrongs do not make a right," said Temple, gravely, and pulling gloomily at his cigar. "If any country attempted to civilize these people by massacring a few thousands, the world would brand them as we brand these. They would say it was going back to the dark ages."

"Yes," assented Phil. "These people are jealous of their rights. The king, despot as he is, dare not infringe upon them; absolute in power, he is yet the most slavish servant of them all, for it is only by upholding their traditions that he is kept in power."

"Ah, sacriste, let us talk. I cannot sleep!" said Gascon.

"Let us have a cup of tea, then, and a smoke," amended Temple. "Where is that rascally steward, Tokio?" he was too grave to call that functionary by the euphonious sobriquet of Jim Crow.

"Tokio," called Phil.

"What you want, sar, Mr. Faraday," answered Tokio, coming out of a dark corner of the house where he had been coiled up asleep, and awoke in no very good humor.

"Tokio, my friend," answered Temple, who felt like kicking him for his ability to sleep, "your master wants a pot of tea made—enough for three—be quick. I'll give you a cigar."

"And a glass of rum," added Phil, who knew how to reach the heart of the savages in general, and this one in particular.

It is a common idea among people who do not trouble their heads to study the subject, that men undertaking such a perilous expedition require stimulants, and indulge in them. It is a fallacy; drinks kill more than the pestilent climate does.

Livingstone never touched it, only brandy medicinally; nor did Speke, Cameron, Du Chaillu, or the most successful of them all, H. M. Stanley.

The rum they carried to trade with; what would such stuff be worth against a cup of tea in a desert?

"What route do we take and how shall we guide our course?" asked Gascon.

"The shortest route into the Fan country, for they are

real cannibals, and the shortest route out of it into terra incognita. I have placed the latitude of Coomassie 7 deg. north; long. 1 deg. 35 min. west. That was our starting point. I vote we take the southeast and cross the equator, bearing southwest, making a circuit so as to fetch the Gaboon River—in that we cross the equator again—but it is my birthplace, and we can take Yola on the way."

While he was talking, our hero passed his finger slowly over a rough map he had drawn, pointing out particularly that portion north and south of the equator which had never yet been trodden by foot of white man, or, if it was, they had never lived to tell it, for it is a blank on the map of Africa.

"You're a clever fellow," said Temple, flatteringly. "I never could study geography—upon my soul."

"Ah, my friends, nor I—except of my own country," "countree," as he pronounced it.

"No," smiled Phil, "you Frenchmen think that France is the world."

"Parbleu! yes, until we do live out of it."

"I have certain cousins westward of the Atlantic who think the same thing," ironically remarked Temple, and grinned for the first time.

Phil laughed outright, an unusual display, for he inherited much of his father's saturnine, national character.

By means of this banter, interlarded with some serious conversation, they managed to tire themselves out, though it was morning before they slept.

They were awakened by the steward, and found the sun up. The king visited them after breakfast, and begged them to stay.

Phil said they could not. The king looked vexed.

"Till to-morrow," he urged.

Now an African's to-morrow means any time. Phil did not choose to give in. He explained they had stayed only one day in Ashantee, and must pass on. He would make the king a handsome present for an escort and guide out of Dahomey.

Another of those long-winded palavers which, with leave-taking, consumed five hours, and they bid farewell.

In two days the Dahomans left them. We must pass over the but slightly varying scenes of travel; over land on foot; on the water in canoes, passing or stopping at the same wretched villages with their dirty hovels and greedy, naked savages, who forced "toll" whenever they could, and became a banditti when it was not given, until they reached a dreary wilderness, the last great obstacle between them and the Fan country.

Three days of weary marching here, crossing fetid swamps, fighting with mosquitoes or the deadly ants, and then a deserted village, with the huts half destroyed, and signs of devastation everywhere.

The explorers looked around upon this desolation and at each other.

"What does it mean?" asked Phil of the steward.

He explained.

The tribe had gone on the war path.

"When anybody killed by de odder people, den de people ob de killed man leab village—go to war."

"Well, we'll take possession for to-night," said Phil, "and some of you lazy rascals go out and try and find some game; we can't live on ground nuts and rice always."

A rest was a blessing to them now, and Phil contemplated staying a couple of days or so.

The most tenable of the deserted houses was occupied—the trading goods stored and fires lighted.

They were soon in sound slumbers—dreamless, undisturbed sleep—when suddenly they were startled.

A wild and indescribable rush and roar on all sides—the voice of Tokio screaming:

"If you love me—wake! Run—run!"

They started up. The hut shook and rocked, a portion of the roof fell in, and rain in drops so large that they stung wherever they struck, poured down upon them.

A fierce tornado was sweeping over this part of the country, destroying everything that could not resist its mighty violence.

They rushed out of the frail protection, only to be thrown down, while small trees were torn up from the earth and sent whirling in the air like fagots.

Appalling shrieks told Phil that some of his faithful servants were hurt—perhaps dead.

The darkness was intense.

Where should they go? It was safer not to move; danger surrounded them on all sides, and when they tried to rise the wind took their breath away.

"To the river!" cried Tokio, in an agony of terror.

They scrambled up then, and made for the river bank, only to be thrown down the moment they reached it.

Half-stunned and breathless they lay there.

Another and fiercer rush and roar saluted them.

What was it?

A continuous surge and hiss, the thunder deafened them and the lightning passed over the ground like forked snakes.

It was a moment of awful horror.

Above the din could be heard the cries and groans of the affrighted savages, wallowing in the river.

Only when the lightning flashed could any object be discerned.

One electric burst lasted long enough to show Phil the cause of the continuous rush and roar that made the wind seem a whisper in comparison.

The water pouring down from the hills in the cataracts had swollen the river, and it was rushing down upon them—an irresistible flood.

CHAPTER V.

A NIGHT ATTACK—A SCARED AND HUNGRY PEOPLE—THE POISONED ARROW.

When our friends found themselves thrown down for the second time they thought it better to remain there for safety's sake.

The presence of a flood caused them to change their tactics very rapidly. Fortunately, a tornado does not last long.

They could keep their feet now, and crept under such shelter as the wooded land afforded.

Nothing could be done now till morning, and when the sun burst forth in all its glory, and the cloudless sky smiled its pitiless calm, they saw no traces of the village—its devastation was complete.

This was not all.

Two of Tokio's men had been killed by a falling tree, another—a M'pongwe—severely injured.

There are some traits in the "noble savage" that command our admiration; one of them is the endurance under bodily torture.

This poor fellow looked at the doctor with his grateful soul in his eyes when Temple, with the assistance of Dayoko (Blacking Bottle) and another, laid him on a couple of blankets and tended his hurts—two fractured ribs and a broken arm.

He seemed struck with Temple's mode of treatment, for these children only have their fetich men, who out-do the most villainous quack that ever lived.

A hasty breakfast, some rum given out to cheer the men up a bit, and the march recommenced—with damper clothes and damper spirits than they had for many a day.

A rest at noon for nearly three hours, a dinner, and on again till nightfall.

One of the scouts ahead came rushing back to Tokio, his face fully expressive of alarm.

Phil had to wait while these two talked forty to the dozen—and both at once, before he could learn what had occurred.

"He say," exclaimed Tokio, "the people of dat village one mile off—war paint—much danger for true."

"Very well, now you and the other two scamps walk close to us—close, mind you—we'll lead the way—tell the carriers to fall into the rear and the fighting men to follow us in three files. Let one of you attempt to turn back and I'll shoot him like a dog!"

"And so will I," said Temple.

Those pale, resolute faces were not to be doubted. Tokio shrank away humiliated, and then threatened the whole of the little army that if they did not obey his orders, then the white men would blow them all up with gunpowder."

They firmly believed it—used to all sorts of cruelty among their own people what, thought they, would not the white man do?

Tokio was for waiting till morning.

Phil sternly reiterated the order for him to keep close, and they marched silently on to the village—only a temporary one, with shelters made of sticks and palm leaves, and when the scouts, frightened, would have fled, the voice of Tokio bade them stop.

"We bring you white man."

This, repeated several times, had its desired effect.

Four or five men came forward, and by the light of a torch which Dayoko had lit, saw the young travelers.

Then commenced a pandemonium of tongues.

"I verily believe their tongues are slung in the middle," said Temple. "What a Babel! What's it all about?"

"Exchanging news, no doubt," was Phil's answer.

The women who had lost a relative or husband—and there are an awful lot of women to one relative—were howling and moaning and shrieking their funeral dirge with a force and harmony that could only be equaled by tying up about a hundred stray and hungry dogs in a roofless shed on a moonlight night.

Presently, however, the head men of the tribe came forward and greeted our friends. The good news spread that the white men had come to trade, and like a widow who forgets her grief on the reading of her husband's will,

the women left off howling with an eye to beads and tobacco.

Phil asked if they could buy any fowls or meat.

The village was destitute. They had been living on plantains and roasted ground nuts for a week.

Then Phil offered the chief some powder, rum and tobacco if he would furnish them with guides, as he wanted to get to Nauge-Nauge.

Then occurred a heated discussion between Tokio and the chief.

"You can't go on," said Tokio.

Then he explained that between here and there the people were at war, adding, significantly, that they fought with poisoned arrows.

"Very well, but I shall go on in the morning. Tell him so. I shall stay here to-night; let his men keep guard, and if surprised, retire within the village—we'll see to the enemy, palaver said."

Tokio translated this, and there was much rejoicing. The chief was in hopes that he would persuade the white men not to go on in the morning.

Matters extraneous upset this little speculation.

Not three hours had the tired travelers slept, when they were awakened for the first time to native warfare (properly war-unfair) in all its cruelty.

The enemy had stolen upon the unprotected camp, for it was nothing better, and from under cover of the brushwood had sent a deadly volley of arrows among the sleeping women and children.

The men who were keeping watch had their bodies outlined by the fire glow, and were shot down by these silent, death-dealing missiles.

The yells of the besieged were frightful.

There was a panic, and the followers of the explorers would have fled, had not the white leaders appeared and used their voices.

Phil gave his orders rapidly.

He ordered the people of the village to cluster in the center the old men, women and children.

Then he formed his own men in a circle around them.

"You must fire into the bush," he said, "it will drive the enemy back."

"But I can't tell where they are," said Temple; "why don't they come on? I hear nothing."

"What's that?"

Phil alluded to a sharp sis-s-s which sounded close to them.

"Grande Dieu!" cried Gascon, "this is not fighting—this is not war."

"Now, boys, blaze away!" cried Phil.

While he was speaking, and before Tokio could repeat the order, one of the Gaboon men standing at Phil's elbow dropped like a stone.

Phil was staggered. He heard nor saw nothing strike him.

He could not resist stooping down and looking at the fallen man. Then he placed his hand over his heart, and his fingers came in contact with something.

A mere wisp of straw, twelve inches long, and light as a feather. He plucked it; the savage writhed for a moment and lay still in death.

"What can we do against such weapons as this?" said Phil.

"What is it?" asked Temple.

"The poisoned arrow! Ah! I am struck, too," he cried, as he felt a sting in his chest.

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT RENDERED THE POISONED ARROW HARMLESS—A MARCH UPON THE ENEMY BY DAYLIGHT—A DARING CHARGE, AND PHIL'S SINGLE-HANDED COMBAT IN THE BUSH.

Phil, who would have received a dozen bullets without uttering a cry, could not help the thrill of horror that possessed him when that fragile, silent messenger of death stung him.

"Where has it hit you?" asked Temple, laying his hand on our hero's shoulder.

"In the face."

"I hope not," answered the young doctor gravely.

It had struck Phil as he said, but the poisoned tip had first struck him on the breast, and the resisting force of the woolen clothes had broken the tender reed, and with such velocity had it been projected, that the butt end flew up into his face in splinters.

Had it been otherwise, our hero would have suffered a most tormenting death, though violent agony would have been brief, for these arrows kill in a few minutes.

The effectiveness of these poisoned arrows proved one thing.

The enemy was within fifty yards or even much less.

"We ought to reach them even with the most haphazard firing," said Phil. "Let us take ten each of our men, and move forward after each volley."

This was a mode of fighting that their followers did not understand, especially in the dark.

Tokio, whose faith in his young master was unlimited, did effective battle with his tongue among his followers before any of them could be got to venture into the bush.

A few effective volleys, the third of which proved to the enemy that our little army was nearing them, caused a scatter.

The howls and cries proved how well the long range rifles had done their work.

Not another arrow or spear reached the little camp the remainder of this night, and before the sun was up the whites moved on with their followers, with a line of scouts forming the semi-circle of a fan, going on in front.

For a short distance they went through the woods and came upon many of the dead who had fallen.

Too cautious to risk losing any of their small number by an ambush, our friends struck out for a path, and kept to whatever open ground they could find.

The tribe they had thus protected was full of gratitude, and the boldest of the young men volunteered to become guides.

But they were not yet allowed to leave this country without another skirmish.

One of the scouts came pelting back and informed Phil that the enemy was lying in ambush half a mile beyond the entrance of the next thicket.

"Well, we'll soon get them out of that," smiled Phil.

"Gascon, I'll command the file of scouts—keep close in the rear—and you, Temple——"

"Parbleu," interrupted Gascon, with a soldier's promptitude, "we should have a right and left wing so as to swoop down upon these beggars from both sides the moment you draw their fire."

"Very well. Tell us how to form, then."

Gascon's instructions were simple and wise.

The party again moved on, Phil leading with a few scouts, who, from time to time, would crawl like snakes through the brush whenever they thought they had unearthed the savages.

Tokio signaled to Phil to draw himself down, and by a signal kept the scouts near him still.

He had come upon the ambushade. The enemy was within rifle range.

How did he tell?

By the scared flight of birds, and the excited chattering of monkeys in the trees some two hundred yards ahead.

"Go and warn Lieutenant Gascon," he said, to Tokio, "and send another to the doctor; they must come with great caution."

Swift of foot now that there was no enemy before them, these two faithful servants soon apprised our friends.

Gascon's line passed Phil to the left, and Temple's to the right. Then Phil stood up, and, rifle in hand, went boldly forward.

He knew this was the safest way to throw the enemy off their guard. But they had scouts on the lookout, and one presently darted up like a startled hare.

Phil stopped just long enough to take hasty aim and fired. Never did startled hare turn a more sudden or perfect summersault than did this one.

The shot was the signal for Gascon and Temple's men to open.

A fearful cross-fire began then. The bullets could be heard hissing through the bush, or striking with a dull "pid" against the trees, while a few dusky forms, leaping up into view and then suddenly disappearing, told where the rest of the bullets went to.

Then the savages rose like a covey of partridges—firing their arrows at random, and then fleeing wherever there was a loophole of escape, jumping like stags in their panic.

But our friends were after them, and their rifles would have reached them at double the distance.

There is always a wild infatuation in chasing a flying foe, and neither Phil nor his two comrades could keep their people in check now, and they broke through the brush, whooping and yelling horribly, and the three young men, catching the spirit of the chase, went with them.

Each of them carried a heavy naval sword. These they drew now, not having time to reload their muskets.

Phil—the youngest and most active—was equal to any of the natives in jumping obstacles, and soon was one of the foremost.

He was making a final leap toward three terrified savages, when one, who had concealed himself among the undergrowth, caught him by the leg and threw him heavily.

Now, he had no idea for the moment what it was that had thrown him, which gave his adversary an advantage.

Phil's sword had struck the ground so heavily as to force

the hilt from his hand, so that when the guttural, exultant cry of the savage warned him of his real danger, he was literally unarmed.

The savage was upon him in an instant, armed with the formidable Fan-tomahawk—an implement so "fearfully and wonderfully" made, and so superior to any ax or knife to be had of the traders—that the Fans themselves discarded those of European or American manufacture for those of their own handicraft.

"Out, you black demon!" he cried, trying to rise.

But the savage was upon him, and aimed a blow at his head which would have cleaved it in twain had not Phil caught his wrist and turned the blow aside, causing the flat of the weapon to fall harmlessly, though with considerable force, upon his shoulder.

In this moment of dire peril, Phil had to recognize the superiority of the savage over civilization.

While his own grip slipped every time he grasped the smooth, bare skin of his assailant—his own strong, woolen clothes afforded the savage a purchase that severely handicapped our hero.

After that abortive blow, they closed and struggled like Titans.

The fight was for the tomahawk.

Phil got hold of it at last, though the savage was kneeling upon his breast, driving the breath out of him.

He became frenzied. All his strength was exerted in one effort. He was almost blinded and was barely conscious that his arms were free, that he wielded the powerful weapon, that a cry rang out, mingled with a sharp crash, and that the weight was off his chest and his arms fell listless at his side.

CHAPTER VII.

SAFE—A SIX DAYS' CANOE JOURNEY ON AN UNKNOWN RIVER
—SIGNS OF THE ELEPHANT—A GRAND HUNT,
AND FATAL ENCOUNTER WITH THE
MAMMOTH BRUTE.

"Phil."

"Yes; what is it—time to get up, eh?"

"Up—well, I think so—how did this happen?"

Temple was kneeling by Phil's side, and Phil, with his eyes open, and his mind in a haze, was staring blankly and wonderingly at him.

"Drink this, old man, you'll feel better then."

"Drink—oh, ah, yes!"

He felt a cup at his lips and drank slowly, drew a deep sigh, and then felt himself gently lifted into a sitting posture.

"Ah, that is splendid," said a voice in his ear, and the face of Gascon peered over his shoulder.

"Thank you, doc. Thanks, Gaston. I had a hard tussle with that black."

"So we see. Shall we camp here for the rest of the day?" said Temple.

"No—no—let us get on to the river; we can lose no time now," and Phil arose to his feet without assistance.

He looked around him.

A little way off lay the dead savage.

"Where are the enemy?" asked Phil.

"Routed."

"Many killed?"

"We have counted thirty-four."

"Then we will not stay here. A little brandy, Temple, I'm shaky," and then he explained how he got into this mess, and how the savage was pounding the breath out of him with his iron-like knees.

Phil had not been missed until the enemy was completely routed; then one of the natives, walking back over the ground, stumbled over him.

He gave the alarm, thinking the gallant youth was dead.

He had only fainted.

The march was continued now, the whole village going with them, the women gladly becoming carriers, and the men, fearing to be left to the tender mercies of their stronger foe, offered to join the expedition for a little rice and tobacco per diem.

The march to the river was made without further accident.

Here they found another village, but the natives were peaceful, and they rested till canoes were made to carry the party.

The natives are wonderfully expert in making these little vessels, and still more expert in managing them, a feat that few whites could perform without being turned over every ten minutes.

Journeying by day was pleasant enough, but when night came they suffered beyond human endurance, well nigh.

The mosquitoes swarmed down upon them thick as particles of sand in a sandstorm, and the pestilent, vaporous malaria arose from the sluggish swamps, hanging around them like a poisonous shroud.

Every one of these dreadful nights left its mark upon our friends in the morning.

They looked into each other's pallid, haggard faces, and wondered if each was the mirror of the other. Tea and preserved meat, however, soon would bring them around again, and nerve them for the same struggle through the coming night.

This for six days, and now the stream became narrow and the water black and stagnant.

A propitious spot was sighted, and the expedition halted amid towering, sloping banks, exquisite foliage and delightful scenery.

Not any of the natives knew this place at all, and hence they eyed it with great disfavor. Phil only smiled when he saw the sullen and half-scared looks, and heard Tokio's absurd objections to staying.

"Tell your people," he said, sternly, "that they will have to go into many countries they have not seen or heard of."

"But this place," persisted Tokio, "it is said is inhabited by furious spirit people, who will capture us and sell us into slavery."

"Never mind what is said; you tell your fellows that the white men fear no spirit people, because they can conquer them, and make slaves of them, too."

"That was a lucky hit," said Temple, while Gascon lit a cigar, remarking that:

"These people are but poor children, after all."

Tokio returned, and wanted to know if a village should be built here.

"We shall not stay long," answered Phil; "only long enough to find out where we are, and shoot large game, if there is any."

Still they set about making little huts with branches of trees and palm leaves, which answered splendidly the purpose of tents.

Then Phil and his two friends chose their favorite hunters—ten in all—and started up the verdant hill to the interior.

They had not proceeded far when a cry of surprise and delight broke from one of the M'pongwes.

"Elephant tracks," he said.

The party came to a halt.

Phil, after a close examination of the "tracks," said there must be a considerable number of elephants, and that the tracks were quite fresh.

Upon which Dayoko, who had taken the place of Tokio, left in charge of the camp, suggested that more men should be sent for.

The natives generally resort to cunning in dealing with these larger animals, and, not understanding the value of time, will waste months ensnaring them.

Phil saw the drift of Dayoko's suggestion.

"We hunt elephants as we do everything else," he said; "you may hurry back and bring our elephant rifles and some of your men, if you like; but if you stop and so delay us we shall go on without you, in which case you'll not get your share of the prize."

That settled Dayoko.

He flew like a deer, and the hunters turned their attention to the giant game.

"Let us press quietly on," said Phil. "If the brutes have found a particular kind of tree they are fond of they will not leave the ground until they have stripped them of every bit of succulent foliage upon them."

A truth that the others knew from reading the experiences of elephant hunters.

They had to proceed with great caution, for this enormous animal is very easily scared, and will take to flight on the slightest alarm.

The tracks became thicker and fresher as the party proceeded, and long before they had expected such good fortune they discovered the presence of the ponderous beasts.

The hunters had come upon one of those comparatively open pieces of ground distributed here and there throughout the wooded regions of Africa.

"They must be asleep," said Dayoko; "why not build a nghal and wait till the new moon? There is a medicine man in the village. He will keep them quiet with fetich."

"Hear this innocence," said Paul in disgust to Temple.

"What's the matter?"

"He talks of building a nghal, if you know what that is; well, it's simply a very rough and rickety fence which they erect in places of this kind, leaving just room enough for one elephant to enter, and, would you believe it, those mammoths of strength are such fools that they never think of breaking down the wretched barrier and walking off."

"Why?"

"Ask Dayoko, and he will tell you that fetich keeps them quiet," and Phil laughed.

They could see the elephants now. Three at least—how many more remained to be seen they could not conjecture.

One of them was an immense creature, and if age had anything to do with size he must have been very old indeed.

The three were employed in tearing off the leaves of the trees—lifting their trunks in a very lazy and sleepy way, and possibly dreaming that their solitude was sacred from intrusion.

At this juncture the messenger and several natives headed by the indefatigable Tokio—came running up and handed the white chiefs their immense elephant rifles.

But Tokio, when he regained his breath, was emphatic. The medicine men never let them kill elephants till the new moon came, he added. To which Phil answered:

"Your medicine men can go to the dickens!"

"Ah! that is correct," chimed in Gascon, the irreverent; "and, my friend, if the new moon does not choose to come and look down on this charming sport, we shall kill the elephants without her."

"We must form in a circle and close in," said Phil. "Let no attack be made till we see the number we have to contend with."

And now operations began in earnest. The party began to close in on the unsuspecting animals, and perhaps no one's heart beat more than did our hero's and Temple's.

True sportsmen never underrate the hazard they take, and are therefore more susceptible to excitement than the novice, who mistakes blind ignorance for nerve and courage.

The astonishment of our friends was great when they discovered no less than seven elephants in all.

The largest one was the first to discover the common enemy. He looked in surprise at those three strangely-clad white-faced figures—for truly never had elephant in these parts seen these biped animals before.

The brute began to shake his head and sway his trunk very uneasily, and make a peculiar blowing noise.

This startled the rest.

Phil and Temple had got this biggest one covered, while Gascon and three of his men covered the next nearest to him.

Dayoko and ten natives had been sent around to drive the animals toward this formidable ambush.

"Ready?" sang out Phil.

"Ready!"

The answer came cool enough from Gascon and Temple.

It was like the opening of a battle—the supreme moment had come—the three friends fired.

The result was more than could have been anticipated.

Not one of the brutes fell, though every bullet had found its billet in some portion of each of the foremost three victims.

Wounded, startled and maddened, they stampeded—so did the other four. They not only avoided their assailants, but the natives sent to drive them on, until another shot brought one of the three down.

Some African explorer has said that an elephant cannot turn quickly. I think I am in a position to deny that most emphatically.

They will raise themselves on their hind legs and swing around like a gun on a pivot.

One of the brutes did it in this case, and so swiftly, too,

that one of the natives was momentarily paralyzed with terror.

Phil called to him and raised his rifle, but before he could pull the trigger the elephant had snatched up the terror-stricken victim, hurled him furiously in the air, and trampled him to a jelly the moment he came down.

Phil fired, and the poor maddened brute fell with such awful force and concussion that he seemed to shake the very earth.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW THE ELEPHANT HUNT ENDED—THE FATAL RAPIDS—
ANOTHER RIVER—A CANNIBAL SETTLEMENT—FRESH
HOSTILITIES—SURROUNDED BY A TERRIBLE FOE.

In the meanwhile Temple and Gascon had been fully occupied. The fate of the unfortunate native had distracted their attention and caused the valiant savages to take to their heels.

Thus they found themselves, each with a furious and wounded elephant on his hands, and a very uncomfortable handful—or double handful—they found them, since the hunted turned the tables and chased the hunters.

"We must make a stand against these two, at least," called Temple to Gascon, as they each slipped behind a tree.

"Yes; as you say, we cannot run."

"Don't let them come too near," hurriedly exclaimed Temple, who had but little faith in the shelter the slender tree was likely to afford him.

Gascon, on the other hand, seemed to think himself well covered, and had a flippant remark on the end of his tongue when Temple fired.

It was a splendid shot; the bullet entering the right eye of the mammoth brute, brought it down while it was at full tilt, and the impetus it had gained caused the immense bulk of struggling flesh to roll against the tree, and the shock nearly split it.

Gascon's shot followed close to Temple's but it was not so effectual. He stood peering from behind the tree, wondering when the elephant was going to fall.

"Run!" cried Temple.

"Out of that!" yelled Phil, ready now. Gascon did not appear to understand them, and did not budge.

He had forgotten that these playful creatures can uproot a tree as a man would a stubborn weed.

Most certainly this one would not only have uprooted the tree, but Gascon too, if Phil had not fired the fatal shot.

But so near was the careening beast that it butted the tree in its fall with such fearful force as to throw it half down, and Gascon, getting some of the concussion, took a horizontal flight of eight feet, and at least an altitude of three.

"Diable!" he gasped, when his breath returned; "did the brute hit me with the tree or its trunk?"

"The brute's trunk or the tree's? queried Temple, laughing heartily now that he knew Gascon had suffered no injury.

Having already shown their discretion, the natives now showed their valor by returning, howling a triumphant song over the three most formidable elephants were

dead, and the other four had made tracks for fresh fields and pastures new.

By this time they were joined by a large force from the camp, and the elephants were dismembered in a surprisingly short space of time, and the tusks presented to the victor with much ceremony.

A few days' stay, in the hope of getting other and more edible game—for however much the native may enjoy the tough and stringy elephant, our friends could not eat it—resulting in non-success, they embarked again in the canoes—save the people of the deserted village, who had decided to stay, the chief consenting to some of the young men joining the expedition as guides—and the weary river travel was continued.

Fifteen miles on, and it narrowed to such an extent that the trees on either bank formed a green arch, making it a sylvan grove by day, but a hot-bed for mosquitoes by night.

Five miles further still, and they came to a fork where the rapid current rushed across this sluggish river, and swept the canoes into a serpentine channel with alarming velocity.

The smallest canoe contained three of the guides, and took the lead. A sudden and wild commotion in this boat spread a panic among the rest.

"What is it?" asked Temple.

"Turn back, all of you!" shouted Phil from his large canoe.

Turn back! How?

The current was running several miles an hour here, and seemed to laugh at the efforts of the powerful canoeists. Yet turn back they must, for at that moment the cause of the panic in the guides' canoe was understood.

They were on the brink of a fierce rapid. Unable to turn in time, the natives had started from their kneeling posture to jump out.

But their canoe was swept over. All the others saw it twist and turn in the savage roll of seething water and then disappear with the natives forever.

It was a fight for dear life now. Fortunately, once out of the force of the current of the tributary, there was a basin of smooth water, in appearance at least, though it rolled on imperceptibly and fed these rapids.

Now came the most exhausting work. The expedition had to land, and all of the canoes and stores conveyed by portage around the rapids, until another navigable river was reached.

Here the arms and ammunition were carefully looked to, and the men kept on the qui vive, for the remaining guides said that they were in the most savage portion of the Fan country; news that made Gascon's flesh creep, knowing, as he did, that Fan meant cannibal.

Not having either space or permission to give you an insight into the variety of change—that is, the physical geography of Africa, together with the traditions and habits of the inland tribes, I refer you to books on Africa.

It is sufficient here to say, that after four days of travel, like sardines in a box, the high and mountainous banks of the river began to melt, as it were, in the morning mists; and now, on either side, ranged the low, level, swampy land, which arose gradually toward the wooded interior.

A quarter of a mile from the marshy bank was a village or city, for it was very large, and the people numerous, as

was soon seen by the swarms that came hurrying down the river.

Phil called a halt, and waited till Temple and Gascon were paddled alongside his canoe.

"I don't like the looks of these people," he said.

"They look particularly warlike," replied Temple, as indeed they did.

They brandished spears, carried immense shields, tomahawks, and broad-bladed knives more formidable than a naval sword, besides a quiver of arrows.

"Parblen! they will make us pay pretty well for a palaver here," said Gascon.

"Yes; we will move further down, and await developments."

The moment the canoes were put into motion, the cannibals set up a continuous howling and yelling, while many dashed into the river, and attempted to reach the canoes.

"Paddle—paddle!" cried Phil, loudly and sternly, and the light crafts shot through the water like the wind.

By this time there was a great black cloud of the savages on the bank, and when they saw their anticipated prize escaping them the cloud suddenly dispersed amid the most furious cries.

Wondering what this meant, Phil reiterated his cry to "paddle," and kept a sharp lookout, especially when two miles further on they came to a sharp bend or neck of land.

Scarcely had they swooped around it than the meaning of the dispersing of the cloud became known.

A fleet of enormously long war canoes darted out and surrounded them completely—nearly twenty in number—and some of them containing over thirty natives.

Before a shot could be fired the air was darkened with arrows, and the largest of the canoes were propelled with terrible swiftness toward the three containing our friends, and with the evident intention of running them down.

CHAPTER IX.

THE EFFECT OF A VOLLEY OF BULLETS—THE ARTIFICES OF THE SAVAGE—REJECTING PEACE—STORMING THE FAN CITY.

Had this most warlike and savage tribe of savages shown less forcible hostile demonstrations it would have been the policy of our explorers to have propitiated them with peace offerings.

As, however, they had no time to get at crimson cloth, beads and tobacco, they gave them what was much more handy and required no parley.

A scathing volley of bullets.

Had iron-leaden lightning descended from heaven among them their consternation and awe could not have been much more terrible.

When they saw their companions fall in dozens—when they heard the thunder-like rattle, and saw the nearly forty jets of flame darting toward them like snakes, panic seized them, and the warriors dropped the elephant-hide shields, and took the paddles from their dead or dying companions and propelled their canoes toward the shore, beaten but not vanquished, as was soon seen.

The part of the river at which the encounter took place was not only narrow, but both banks were thickly wooded.

The natives divided, some landing on one side and some on the other.

They were called upon to stop, but took no heed of the command, not even when another volley was fired among them.

Gascon, in his excitement, ordered his crew to follow the enemy.

"Stay!" shouted Phil.

Obedient as a soldier always is, Gascon ordered his men to stop, but with very ill grace.

"This is inexplicable," he said.

"Not in the least," answered Phil.

"But, my friend, you give them time."

"No—we shall give them a chance——"

"To spit us on their arrows!"

"Not even that; but a chance to come to terms."

"I don't see why we should pay these people for anything when it is ours by right of conquest."

"You forget their numbers. They are already ashore——"

"I see—I see!" said Gascon, excitedly, "and they will lie in ambush all along the banks for miles, and shower their arrows into us while we have nothing but trees and bushes as marks for our bullets."

"We will see if they will hold a palaver if we promise to return to the village. What do you say, Temple?"

"Certainly. Though we should win in a contest with the beggars, we should lose some of our men, and every one is to us of more importance than fifteen to them."

Gascon gave in but did not look convinced.

One of the smaller canoes was signaled, and Tokio, with two interpreters and two to paddle, put in it unarmed.

"Go and tell those people," said Phil, after a short confab with his comrades, "that we do not want to make war; that if they will return to their village, and meet us in peace, we will return."

"Yes, Mr. Faraday, sir."

"That if they have fowls to sell we will buy them, and we will hold palaver that they may make good the damage they have done in attacking us."

"Dat all?"

"No; if they show any hostility when you try to land paddle back to us and we will meet and cover you."

Tokio, with something like heroic fidelity, started on this dangerous mission.

Reaching within fifty yards of the shore he told the Fan interpreter to summon a chief.

Not one of the hostiles could be seen now.

Not only had they effected a marvelously rapid landing, but had drawn up and carried away their immense canoes with them.

After the first call a dead silence reigned both on the water and on the land.

The interpreter stood up and shouted in a double-barrel sort of voice, and gesticulated like a clown in a circus.

Still no answer.

Affairs began to look decidedly grave.

Out of the bush sneaked a score or so of savages, all fully armed.

They were led by a messenger, and brought overtures from the chief, no doubt.

Having reached the water's edge, he and the interpreter

in the canoe held a warm discussion, made all the more lively by the interpreter's efforts to translate to Tokio as he went along.

But when they saw Tokio positively gyrating in the canoe; swinging his arms in the air; bending himself double, and rolling his head as if he was bewitched, even Gascon understood that something was wrong somewhere.

They waited in breathless anxiety while Tokio paddled out to them.

Their misgiving had been well founded.

The king would not hold palaver unless the white men landed with twenty slaves—all unarmed—and the canoes were sent away. Far away.

The young explorers laughed at the absurdity of the proposition, and sent back a message that the whole expedition must land in their village. That they would send presents and so forth, and to show that they were in earnest they sent the king a piece of crimson cloth and some tobacco.

This time four natives paddled out in a small canoe and met Tokio.

The presents were given, and the four returned with the white chief's message.

Another long and uncertain delay.

Then the four natives were seen running down to their little canoe.

What was the astonishment of our friends when they beheld those natives haul the canoe out of the water and scamper back under cover of the bush.

Tokio took the initiative on the instant, and paddled back to our hero.

It was well for him that he did so.

A shower of arrows sped out of the bush—all along the line—at which a yell went from the opposite bank, and another shower of arrows came upon them from that direction.

One of the men in Tokio's canoe was killed outright.

Several were wounded in the large canoes, while Temple had one of his sleeves ripped up, and Phil had his hat bowled off his head.

This was going a little too far.

"Fire!" he cried.

The natives stood up and poured in a couple of volleys on both sides of the river, and while they were reloading, Phil ordered the boatmen to paddle on to the village.

This movement was evidently unexpected by the Fans.

They could be seen here and there through the gaps in the bush, or darting between the trees back toward their village.

The safety of the expedition lay in its rapidity of movement, and they swept around that neck of land with the swiftness of whales.

This grand coup was performed under a perfect storm of arrows, but Phil would not let a shot be fired until they were about to land at the village.

Here he knew they would meet with the greatest danger.

It was a critical moment when the canoes grounded and the natives leaped into the river, some of them up to their waists in water.

"Charge on the village!" cried Phil. "Fire the moment they show themselves, and fire huts—we will give them a lesson."

This order was translated, and the whole fighting force of the expedition charged up the slope.

Not more than half way, however, when again the air was made dark by a cloud of arrows, and at the same time a sweeping fusillade, rent the atmosphere, starting into life a thousand echoes that mingled with the shrieks and groans of the injured.

CHAPTER X.

DECOYED INTO THE WOODS—THE KING OF THE CANNIBALS PROVES HIS CUNNING TOO MUCH FOR OUR HERO

—IN THE CENTER OF A BURNING FOREST.

Despite of the immeasurable superiority of the long range rifles and trained marksmen, the expedition was at a fearful disadvantage.

You must bear in mind that the natives were under cover and in the houses, lying hidden in the bush or behind trees; while the storming party were exposed in the only open space between the forest and the river.

To give some idea of the frightful force with which some of the arrows were projected, I will explain the position of the bowmen.

Those hidden in the thicket were in a reclining position. Their weapon was a cross-bow, of such strength that they had to place their feet against the bow and pull the string back with both hands.

This done, and the bow fixed, they had only to touch a peg and the string was loosened with a twang that could be heard a hundred and fifty feet distant.

As these same arrows would go through the hide of a living elephant, their effect upon the naked natives can be imagined.

As the expedition moved steadily on toward the city, the houses were deserted by the Fans, many of whom fell on their way to the woods by the white men's guns.

Once in the city, a constant musketry fire was kept up, while a dozen of the natives with lighted torches, razed the houses to the ground.

This brought the rats out of their holes, and there would have been a sickening massacre of women and children had not our hero and his comrades forcibly restrained their men by striking them over the head with the flat of their swords.

The fire spread with frightful greediness.

The hungry flames leaped from house to house. The trees around were set on fire, and the dense smoke rose in columns and spread into clouds, emitting a sickening stench to be accounted for only by the nature of the burning material and the habits and customs of the ignorant wretches.

That smoke sheltered our gallant party from the myriad of eyes glaring upon them from all sides.

"Come, Gascon," said Phil, "you place a guard over those women and children. They will serve as hostages; Temple and I will continue this fight to the end."

"I should advise you not to attempt to penetrate too far into the woods," suggested Temple.

"We dare not stop yet," answered Phil, "or they will think we fear to follow them."

The fury and despair of the Fans at seeing their homes laid waste and their provisions destroyed, were beyond bounds.

They drew further off and scattered themselves about the forest, and lay in wait, determined upon revenge.

The king addressed his chiefs beneath a swinging palm.

"You see our houses are destroyed. The warriors come with white medicine men who bring fetich.

"That fetich is fire; let my medicine men make same fetich; we will lay in the woods and let the foe come; we will not fight, we will wait.

"Then, when the white medicine men and their warriors all come into the woods, let my medicine men make a circle around them and fire the woods. That is good fetich; it is the fetich of the white men.

"Our wives and slaves and their children are burnt with our homes—we will have vengeance!"

A terrific howl followed this—followed almost immediately by the wailings of those who fancied they had lost their relations.

The din reached the ears of the explorers.

"Ay, we'll give you something to howl for," was Phil's quiet comment; "are you ready, Temple?"

"Quite."

"March, then."

They marched on through the blazing city—on to the dense woods, where they sent scouts forward to reconnoiter.

A strange and sudden stillness reigned over this darkened wilderness.

The scouts reported no signs of the enemy.

"The demons are up to some infernal mischief," said Phil, puzzled.

"A trap is laid for us somewhere and some way."

"Let us try if a little lead won't make them show their hand."

A slow and desultory fire was opened, the natives firing high so as to let the bullets drop vertically through the foliage of the trees.

For fifteen minutes this continued, our hero and Gascon contriving to advance slowly and cautiously.

Another halt. A well-directed volley fired in a semi-circle brought a reply.

A feeble flight of arrows, coming as if they were sent from a distance too great to have effect.

This was a clever ruse on the part of his cannibalistic majesty which even shrewd Phil Faraday did not suspect.

He gave the word to push on, with orders to reserve fire until a given signal.

Another hundred yards, and that signal was given.

If the natives had been in the same spot as when they sent that feeble flight of arrows, the execution would have been terrible.

But they had been working around toward the rear of our friends.

Not to make this too apparent, the king, with true native cunning, ordered a detachment of his bowmen to keep in front, and reply to the fusillade with a flight of arrows sent with sufficient force to kill if they struck, and yet to seem to come from a greater distance than they did.

Thus another reply came, and two of Phil's men dropped dead in front of him.

"It is beginning to get warm," he said.

"It will get hot presently," answered Temple, in a bantering tone.

Neither suspected then how soon and how terribly hot it would get "presently."

To move further in the dark as they were doing would be folly, and they had recourse to scouts.

One of these returned with a grave face.

"Master, I have seen far into the bush. It is empty."

"Which way did you go?"

"To the right."

A second scout hurried up.

"Well?"

"I went far to the front, sir," he replied, "and the bush is empty."

A third scout came in.

"Mr. Faraday, sir, I have been far away, as you ordered me."

"To our left?"

"Yes; and the bush is empty."

Again the eyes of those two daring young men met, and Temple said very gravely:

"Phil, we have made a mistake."

"A blunder. Temple, shall we retreat?"

"Yes; you go forward and leave me to defend the rear. They will know of it and close in upon all sides."

"Temple, what's this? How dark the forest is getting."

"Strangely so—a storm." —

"No, not a storm," answered Phil, paling more than he had ever done since they had been together.

Darker and darker the forest grew; dense and heavy and hot, suffocatingly hot, became the air.

Now a slight crackling and hisses, a fog bank rolling toward them—not lowering but arising.

The natives uttered a long and plaintive cry of mortal terror.

"My heavens, Phil!"

"Fire on all sides!"

On all sides, a lurid glow to the right, a lurid glow to the left, a lurid glow in front and behind them, a denser and denser cloud, stifling hot, a wild rush and roar of a sea of fire. A mighty burst of flame arising to the skies, and trees no longer green, but trees of fire and sparks, of bright jets and dull, red, smoldering bark; and these two heroic young men thus weirdly and awfully illuminated, stood in the center of their cowering, terror-filled followers, victims to their own terrible fetich—fire!

CHAPTER XI.

GASCON'S INTERPRETER—A JOKE THAT FAILED—THE ALARM —THE DANGER.

It need scarcely be explained that Gascon had remained as "commandant" of the little "army of occupation."

Without his presence the lives of the helpless women, children and old men, would not have been safe five minutes.

So completely do the savages appreciate and reciprocate their native barbarities, that these wretched prisoners suffered tenfold the tortures they would have had they been put to the sword or mercilessly butchered by any other available means.

Thus these poor wretches huddled together, wondering what fearful fate could be in store for them, since they

had fallen into the hands of the "spirit men," for to them the white man was nothing less.

Arrived to their own satisfaction to the conclusion that they were going to die, they began to howl their own requiem.

This was too much for Gascon, who at once collared his interpreter and lugged him off to where the captives were penned up.

"Now look here, Blacking Bottle," he said, taking a soothing tug at his mustache, "what do these people want to make this hideous row for? Ask them, parbleu, am I to be howled to death?"

Interpreter: Why do you make this noise? The white chief says if you don't stop he'll light the fires and make you roast your own babies.

Old Man of the Tribe: Tell the white king we are his. We are ready to die—why does he not kill us?

Gascon: What do they say?

Interpreter: They want to die.

Gascon: Tell them to be quiet. Tell them they shall go back to their people when their king surrenders, if they are quiet. Say we are not man-eaters, and that we shall not harm them.

This the interpreter proceeded to do.

The look of grateful astonishment on the old man's face satisfied Gascon that he was understood at last, so he gave the old man some tobacco by way of convincing him of his good feeling, and also a drink of rum.

All this time the principal houses and buildings had been burning, the smoke darkening the air, and the crackling of the wood and cane drowning the reports of the guns of the pursuing party.

Just now, however, when Gascon was holding this palaver, he heard our hero's last fusillade.

He dispatched a messenger to see how far the party had penetrated, and to discover whether any assistance was wanted.

While the messenger was gone, Gascon listened intently for a repetition of the firing, but in vain.

Wondering at the cause of this sudden silence, Gascon would have passed on beyond the limits of the city, had not a sudden and unexpected commotion among his outposts brought him face to face with the heart-sickening peril of his two companions, and the danger of his own little force.

The men on guard at the outposts came rushing rapidly in.

"What now?" cried Gascon, as the messenger he had sent came tearing back, the picture of terror.

"Your people are surrounded by fire, and shut up in the forest, sir! And the hostiles are marching back to attack us!"

"Mon Dieu!" cried Gascon. "Fetch all the men in—quick!"

The natives soon flocked around him, and he marched boldly forward.

He did not go far.

The smoke of the burning city had cleared off, and now a light arose before him that wrung a harrowing groan from his lips.

The forest was in flames!

The raging fire spread with a noise like the roar of

the sea. He looked eagerly along the line of the firmament now visible, and saw then that the fire extended in a large and perfect circle.

"My poor Phil—my poor Temple!" he cried, burying his face in his hands—but only for an instant.

"Where are these monsters?" he cried. "Who did this? Follow me!"

But there was no need to stir. The hostiles were marching back on the ruins of their city. They were now in sight, and their enormous superiority of numbers appalled Gascon.

"We can but die," he said, as he gave the signal to fire.

CHAPTER XII.

GASCON'S STRATAGEM—THE STORM—NOW THE CLOUDS OF SMOKE BECOME WORSE THAN THE FIRE—NO HOPE OF PHIL AND TEMPLE—GASCON'S LAST STAND.

Gascon's reckless valor was intensified now—with no hope of ever seeing his comrades again, and only hungering for revenge, he disregarded the simplest precaution generally observed in savage warfare.

The very boldness of his attack staggered the hostiles.

They thought that all the fighting men were entrapped in the forest, and they would have none but women or wounded to tackle.

Gascon still marched steadily on with his men, until stopped by a line of dense bush.

Here the advice of his steward and the interpreter prevailed, and he retired with his men among the charred ruins of the city.

He called his little force about him, and explained his intention to decoy the enemy back into the ruined city and then fall upon them and capture the king and his chiefs.

His native lieutenants were not devoid of tact or suggestion.

"But, Mr. Gascon," one urged, "s'pose the Fans go down to the river and escape in their canoes and destroy ours?"

This was a new and painful light to throw on the object of their disasters.

Gascon thought for a moment, and most devoutly wished it were night.

"Could we do anything to rescue my poor friends?" he suddenly exclaimed.

The natives shook their heads; they could not get through the fire, they said; they would be attacked in the open while they were trying to cut down the trees.

Then the interpreter suggested that they kill the prisoners.

"No; we will make them the means of decoying the murderous demons back again."

Then he ordered them to be bound together in twos.

"Tell them that we shall leave them, and if they can make themselves heard and so bring back their people, they will be saved; if not, they will die of starvation, unless"—he added, with savage bitterness—"they choose to eat each other, which I have no doubt they are capable of."

This pleased his followers very much, and they set to work securing the wretched prisoners, tying them back to back by the wrists and ankles.

When this important task was completed, the old man,

who had not been secured like the rest, was led away a captive for ultimate service, and Gascon's message given.

Then the stores were removed down to the river, placed in the strongest canoes, and the party, with much ostentatious display of starting on a voyage, paddled slowly away.

The prisoners made good use of the liberty given to their tongues and howled like hungry wolves.

The canoes lay under shelter of the neck of land from whence Gascon had a full view of the appalling conflagration.

"Nothing can save them," he cried, still thinking of his gallant comrades. "Oh, for the night!"

But a change came in the weather almost as good for the purpose as night.

The sun was suddenly obscured—dark, heavy clouds began to lower; a gloomy mist hung like a veil between them and the earth, while a terrific downpour of rain covered the sloping banks of the river with a hundred rushing and serpentine cataracts.

"The will of Providence is in this," cried Gascon, fervently; "who knows but it may be the cause of saving my friends."

Then he gave the order to land, telling his followers to make a barricade of the stores and canoes.

The natives made brief work of this, and when this primitive barricade was completed, two scouts were sent back toward the village to reconnoiter.

The news they brought back caused Gascon's eyes to glisten.

The hostiles were reassembling in the ruins of the city.

"That's enough, then," said Gascon. "We can wait for them till to-night."

Then he turned his attention to the burning forest.

The heavy fall of rain had scarcely lessened the danger of Phil and Temple, though it had somewhat quenched the fire.

Thick yellowish smoke rolled upward in clouds so dense that it was beaten down again by the rain, and spread across the river and along the bank, driving Gascon and his men back, blinded and suffocating.

Nothing could be heard but the falling of the rain, until the storm gained a new element of danger and destruction.

A gale came sweeping heavily from the southeast.

This last calamity filled Gascon with utter despair.

"The rain will cease," he muttered, "and this wind will fan the fire into life again. Diable, but it gives me one piece of satisfaction!"

That piece of satisfaction, as he termed it, was in the fact that this gale hurled the smoke into the ruined village, completely enveloping it like a dense fog.

"Now," he hissed, "it is my turn."

The scouts had already informed him that the tribe had returned with their king; driven in by the fire of their own lighting.

"Come, then; tell your brave fellows that we will fall upon the enemy under cover of that smoke; they can get revenge now."

This news was received with silent manifestations of joy; and Gascon, with the air of a man seeking death, led them on.

He was utterly reckless and indifferent, permitting his

men to commence the attack in the way best known to themselves.

They wanted no teaching in caution and cunning, and before he was aware of how well his little force had disposed of itself, he was startled by the report of a musket, followed immediately by a quick fire along two lines.

The surprised savages, in their terror, ran unarmed into the arms of their assailants, only to fall.

The king, recovering from the first shock of surprise, called his warriors about him and made a determined and ferocious stand.

Gascon drew his revolver and dashed forward, sword in hand.

"Keep close!" he cried to the few who followed him.

At sight of him marching boldly upon the king, his men, who had taken up positions in various parts of the ruins, reloaded their muskets and kept up a steady fire upon the hostiles.

Gascon, during this mad rush, seemed to bear a charmed life.

The arrows fell harmlessly around him, and when he found his passage opposed by a breastwork of spears, he cut them down like reeds with his heavy sword, fought his way through the opposing ranks, and before a hand could stay him, he had reached the king and cut him down.

With his foot on the fallen monarch's chest, he turned upon the infuriated savages.

He used his revolver then, but it was exhausted only too soon, and the savages closing in upon him, and his own people afraid to fire in fear of harming him, he recognized how slender was his chance for life now—not by paling, nor so much as the undue beating of his heart, but by a loud, reckless laugh, which rang out strangely here amid the cries and groans of the dying.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE CENTER OF A FURNACE—A RAY OF HOPE—THE SWAMP—THE WORK OF TITANS—OUT OF THE FIRE.

"Temple, where are you?"

"Here, comrade."

"We can never get out of this. I can't see."

"Throw yourself down, Phil. The smoke will lift presently. Turn this way; you will face the river."

"Thanks; this is better—it is a relief."

"You see, the smoke is already rising."

"Yes, but the fire approaches rapidly."

"All but in one direction."

"Where?"

"Look ahead; you will be able to stand up in a minute."

"Ah, I see—I see!" and filled with new strength and fresh hope, he started up and ran hurriedly forward.

Temple followed, but not a little surprised at our hero's energy.

"Temple," cried Phil, "what does that mean?" and he pointed to that part of the forest where the wood was less thick, and the bush gave place to verdant weeds and rank, coarse grass.

Here the fire was stationary, though the smoke arose in columns.

"What does it mean?" echoed Temple. "Let us explore."

"It means that an extensive and deep swamp runs riverward from there. Temple. That only the tops and branches of the trees blazed up, and the trunks and bushes only smolder. Saved. Temple—saved!"

"Wait, Phil; don't get excited."

"Call the men; we must fell the trees bordering this swamp before that avalanche of fire reaches us," said Phil.

He hurried back to the natives.

They still lay with their faces to the earth.

A few words, however, soon aroused them, and when they heard that there was a chance of escape they proved how well they could make use of it.

Arrived at the swamp they stacked arms, took their axes, and began to fell the trees with a skill and rapidity that would have considerably surprised even a French Canadian axman.

Phil and Temple did not look idly on.

The whole of them depended for their lives upon this cradle of malaria and fever, not more than two hundred yards wide by a quarter of a mile long, and even then the wood upon its banks must be felled or they would be suffocated by the smoke, a death but little less horrible than being roasted alive.

Phil, who had ceased for a moment to remove his coat, felt a pat on the right cheek, on the back of his hand, and his left shoulder.

He looked at his hand, rubbed his cheek, and cried out with as much ecstasy as a man who has discovered a gold mine:

"Rain!"

It was rain, dashing down a moment later like fluttering ribbons; none of your fine spring showers, this, but a genuine downpour—a deluge.

Now the burning portion of the forest began to steam and hiss, and with yells of the wildest joy the natives rested from their labors.

All sounds outside the limits of these storm and smoke-darkened precincts were unheard here.

"Now, Temple, said Phil, "let us march on to the river."

"Yes, it is our best chance."

"We had better keep in the swamp, don't you think?"

"By all means, old fellow. This rain is coming down too furious to last, and it is hard to conjecture what may follow."

They had gone the length of the swamp when the gale sprang up.

The first cloud of smoke drove them back, the natives rushing helter-skelter into the slimy water.

When Phil had recovered from a fit of coughing, and his eyes had ceased to smart, he examined his compass to see where they were.

"We must go straight," he said. "The wind is from the sou'west, blowing diagonally east."

It was a tortuous journey; for the first thousand yards they had to grovel along on all fours.

Bravely they pushed on until they at last emerged from the smoking forest and beheld the swollen river winding before them.

They had reached the very point where the savages had been driven ashore in their canoes.

The canoes lay idly on the bank, and were immediately appropriated.

It was with a grateful prayer for their deliverance that they proceeded to round the neck of land, anxious to re-join Gascon.

"I hope nothing has happened to him," said Temple.

"I guess not. I doubt whether those demons would venture back to their ruined city."

"I don't know. Listen. Musketry, by heaven!"

"Yes, Gascon in danger. Paddle—paddle!" yelled Phil loudly and sternly.

Paddle they did, forgetting their aches and pains as they ran ashore, and, with their rifles ready, marched at the double in the direction of the firing.

Heaven had guided them there only just in time, for Phil and Temple beheld the noble Gascon fall amid a shower of spears, dragging with him a powerful savage.

CHAPTER XIV.

SUBJECTION OF THE CANNIBALS—TERMS OF PEACE—A NIGHT OF HORROR—THE CAPTIVE BIRD—A MESSENGER FROM TEMPLE'S LOST BROTHER.

There is a point at which humanity ceases to be a virtue and becomes a folly.

That point our hero had reached.

"On to them!" he shouted.

"Down with them!" cried Temple.

The appearance of these two white men paralyzed the cannibals. Not only were they fireproof, but fetich-proof.

Being thus terror-bound they were as reeds before the scythe in opposing the desperate onslaught of the valiant and faithful coast men.

The cannibals who tried to escape were surrounded and cut down with such unrelenting fury that the rest took the hint and threw down their arms and themselves, too.

Temple's first thought was for Gascon, whom he gently drew from the pile of savages who had fallen at his hands.

"Gascon?"

"Eh, you here? Oh, no—I'm with you—am I not?—it is Temple's ghost!"

"Not a bit of it, old fellow; are you badly hurt?"

"No, mon cher; but one of those delectable children of nature—bah! what bad taste on the part of nature to have such children—hit me on the back of the head with a tree, or a rock; parbleu; it felt like a mountain."

"I suppose it did, coming in contact only with a mole-hill."

Gascon laughed and forgot his aches and pains. The young doctor soon had him nicely "repaired," as Gascon slyly said, "for the third time."

Already the chiefs had been called together and informed that an unconditional surrender would spare them any further loss of life.

Phil also gave them to understand that white men never tortured or molested their prisoners.

"I will hold palaver with your king," he said.

The chiefs said their king was dead, which, however, was not a fact.

Gascon had merely placed him hors de combat for the time; a little attention from Temple soon enabled his can-

nibalistic majesty to present himself, when a grand palaver was held.

Our friends, of course, dictated all the conditions of peace, in which they struck a bargain.

They demanded six of the largest canoes—and, as we have said, some of them would carry over thirty natives comfortably—and added that if sufficient of the young men of the king's people would accompany them as carriers and boatmen, they would restore them to their own country and pay them well; if they refused, said the interpreter, the white chiefs would take them as slaves.

The vanquished king was only too glad to get off on such terms, and consented readily.

"We ought to stay a couple of days," said Temple. "Our own people want rest; but we can camp on that tongue of land, so to be ready to embark at any moment."

"Yes, and it will give us a chance of trying our success in procuring some large game here," assented Phil.

The night had closed in and no one felt any disposition to converse. The fires were lighted around their camp on the base of the neck of land, and the busy cooks were soon at work.

The explorers had no fear of an attack from the natives to-night, for the whole tribe had given up their arms.

Still, Gascon organized a guard on the military sentinel system, and ordered that the men should be relieved every two hours.

The sun had only just flushed the banks of the turbid stream when our friends were up and doing.

Breakfast was ready for them, and as soon as it was over they equipped themselves for the hunt; at least Phil and Temple did, Gascon only accompanying the party to the ruined city.

They were very humbly received by the king and his chiefs, with whom they held a brief palaver, then Phil and Temple hurried on, and Gascon returned to the camp, glad to leave the detestable spot.

This day's hunt was not over successful, but they brought down a few fowl, a deer, and a large bird of rare plumage.

This last was the incident of the day and set Temple quivering.

They were on the return journey when his attention was called to a bird fluttering in a tree.

"The poor thing seems held captive by something," said Phil.

"It is held captive," responded Temple, after watching the frightened thing's futile attempts to take flight, during which it uttered cries of pain and fright.

Exhausted at last, it settled on the branch from which it had been trying to extricate itself, then it kept lifting and shaking one of its legs.

Temple saw the cause of its captivity then.

A piece of string, apparently some six inches or more long, was fastened above the claw; below the branch of the tree fluttered something that looked like a piece of paper.

The bird had roosted here during the night. The wind had blown the string around it, and the first upward movement of the bird had drawn it as taut as if fastened by the hand of man.

Temple, remembering the mysterious words of the strange missive they had found when he shot the former

bird, felt a thrill run through him, and raising his gun, fired.

The bird fell, dangling by its captive leg, with wings spread wide and motionless.

"I must have that bird, Dayoko."

"Yes, Mr. Temple, sir."

Dayoko went up the tree with very little less ease than a monkey, climbed out on the stouter branch till it bent like a whip cord, and cut the thin branch to which the bird was fastened from its mother limb, and the prize lay at Temple's feet.

Not a second glance did he bestow upon that. He cut the string near the paper-like appendage, which he now examined with an indescribable feeling that was something more than curiosity.

It was a little bag, of a thin, parchment-like substance evidently made out of an inflated bladder of some small animal, and tied so tight at the neck as to be hermetically sealed.

He cut the neck off, and forcing the bag open, withdrew a little roll of transparent parchment—of the same material as the bag, only better prepared—and spreading it out, held up to the astonished Phil an oblong strip, six by two inches.

"Phil, this is the sequel to the first mysterious message. Look, it is covered with legible writing. I almost dread to read it."

Phil stood by his side. The message was written in the blood of some animal or bird, and with a quill pen.

The first line caused Temple to utter a loud cry.

"My heavens!" he gasped, and his eyes stood holdly out as he read:

"I, Algernon Temple, am prisoner with a tribe far in the interior. I have guessed the latitude between 3 and 4 north and longitude 18 or 20 east. It may be nearer the equator than 3. No explorers have ever reached these parts. These people hold no communication with any tribes known to white men. I hope this may fall into the hands of some noble missionary, for I have suffered more than a thousand deaths. All hope of escape is gone. Am watched night and day, and should I not succeed soon, I must ask the Almighty's forgiveness, and slay myself.

"ALGERNON TEMPLE, *Missionary.*"

CHAPTER XV.

A DEBATE—PLANNING A GIGANTIC UNDERTAKING—ON THE WAY—A SERPENT IN THE PATH.

A soul-thrilling and heart-rending missive, that, to fall into the hands of an affectionate brother.

Temple put his hand to his forehead, and for a moment seemed dazed.

"Poor Algy! My brother! Poor, noble, foolish boy!" he cried, striding rapidly away to hide the gush of tears that burst forth unbidden.

"Temple—Edward, old fellow!"—Phil was at his side in a moment, and had laid his hand on Temple's shoulder—"don't turn away from me in your affliction. That bird was not guided to you for nothing, and with such an incentive as that before us, we shall overcome all obstacles. Besides, here we have at once an objective point."

"Thanks, Phil; what you say is reasonable and timely;

but I fancied that I could see poor little Algy's pale face looking up at me from out of that paper."

"Let us lose no time in going to him, Ed. I stand by you till death. You know Gascon will."

"Yes, Phil, let us go back to him."

Carefully Temple put his lost brother's message in his breast. The handwriting was dear to him now.

Gascon hailed them in his usual lively way, until he noticed that Temple was unusually quiet.

"We have another message," said Phil.

"From whom, mon cher?"

"Let him read it, Temple."

Temple handed his brother's message to Gascon. The young Frenchman read, reread it, flushed red, turned pale, pulled at his mustache, and fastened a pair of glistening eyes upon Temple.

"Don't say a word, my dear—dear friend Temple," he said, huskily, and clasping the young doctor's hands. "Let us go to him. Let us start now."

No time was lost. Phil had the maps out and anxiously scanned them.

"Let's see," he said. "Lat. 3 or 4 N, and long. 18 to 20, is that it? Almost on the equator. What is the nearest point marked on the map? See here, that is the highest point reached by the Egyptian Expedition, but much further east, being between longitude 32 and 33. Then comes the head of the river Nile, nearer the longitude marked on your brother's message than anything else. Thus, you see, he must be somewhere in this great tract of terra incognita, which forms an irregular and enormous expanse of country, extending from Matiamro, in south latitude 10 deg., as near as I can get it, to a place on a tributary of the Nile, marked Fertit, which is eight degrees north of the equator."

"True," assented Temple; "but Algy distinctly says he is near the equator."

"Admitting that he is right—though how he ever worked out the reckoning without implements beats me—there is still that great stretch of virgin soil from the equator to Fertit, to say nothing of the fact that we are in the western meridian, and he is in the east."

Temple groaned.

The insurmountable difficulties that presented themselves disheartened him.

"Don't despair, Temple," said Phil, bravely. "Suppose the journey out there and home takes three years?"

"But our stores. They won't last."

"Once arrived at the Calabar, we will send Tokio back; if you remember again, we ordered fresh supplies to be sent to that point; the next can be forwarded to the River Cameroons, as far inland as possible; it is a mere question of expense, and we must afford it, that's all. As far as Tokio is concerned, we can trust him, and we must purchase more men."

"Hurrah!" shouted Gascon, shying his hat in the air. "Mon frere, it is as good as done!"

"It is done on paper," said Phil; "and only three things are necessary to accomplish it in reality."

"And those?"

"Time—faith—energy."

"Fear," put in the irrepressible Gascon, with a grin. "The future Chevalier Gascon d'Albert."

In less than two hours the expedition was afloat once more; the canoes formed in double line, the fighting men being equally divided in the van and in the rear of that occupied by carriers and stores.

The day was advanced too far for them to perform any great journey by night.

The chief desire of our friends was to get away from this horrible place, and the sickening odor of the ruined cannibal city.

The next day they were brought to a stop by another of those treacherous rapids, and Phil, taking the reckoning, decided to go part of the journey by portage.

This was slow work, but necessary, and compelled them to halt at night, it being impossible to make any progress through these thick woods after dark.

The next day they came to a deep ravine, whose gloom was intensified by overhanging trees.

The sound of water could be plainly heard running down the slimy rocks and beating upon the jutting sides below.

A number of trees had been cut down, some placed across and others longitudinally, but much too wide apart for our hero's liking.

These giant logs were damp and moss-grown—slippery to the feet and unstable as a rolling ball.

The natives, having bare feet, with soles as hard as horn, can cross these primitive bridges with comparative ease.

"This is tough," said Phil, "but we must go over."

"Without our boots would be best," suggested Gascon, who, as he said, liked imitating a good thing.

"You can try if you like," smiled Phil. "The experiment will not be lost upon you."

"Ah, thanks; you are satirical—no, I will go in my boots."

Phil gave the orders for the carriers to march, and they did, slowly and carefully—shoulder to shoulder, to give each other support.

Gascon began a new kind of waltz before he had got two steps, which he afterward entitled Valse L'Africaine.

Temple and Phil were close together, and the Krumen, with the canoes, brought up the rear.

They had nearly reached the other side when Dayoko, who was a little in advance of our hero, slipped between the logs which he fortunately caught under his armpits.

Temple was the first to see him go, and rushed forward to extricate him, but recoiled with a loud cry.

Dayoko had fallen beneath an immense tree, whose gnarled branches turned and twisted like huge black snakes.

The cause of his cry was a terrorizing one.

The head, neck and ten feet of the body of a huge serpent had suddenly darted from the treacherous foliage of the tree, and before he could throw himself down the monster reptile had entwined one coil of his powerful body completely around him.

CHAPTER XVI.

BLOCKADED.

The lightning rapidity with which the monster coiled around Temple left him no time to think.

He instinctively clutched with both hands at the enormous throat.

The forked tongue all but lapped his face, the fierce and fiery eyes glowed into his like two red-hot coals.

Not a quarter of a minute could Temple have held its head back.

He was almost unconscious now, and felt his bones giving way when something bright gleamed over his shoulder.

"Let go his neck," said a calm voice in his ear.

He was conscious of the glittering head escaping from his hands by a deeper and more angry flash in the terrible eyes—when a report so close as to momentarily stun him rang like a thousand whistles in his ears, and the reptile lay writhing around his feet.

Phil—made superhumanly calm by the very nature of Temple's danger—had stepped forward and thrust the muzzle of his double-barrel elephant rifle down the serpent's throat—a feat that was made easier by the fury of the deadly reptile who darted at the muzzle with distended jaws when Phil called to Temple and fired.

A few blows of the powerful Fan hatchet severed the body into three, and Temple, staggering away, sank down an arm's length from the crushed head.

Fortunately, the promptitude of our hero had saved Temple's bones—the flesh was badly bruised both on his body, chest, and arms.

The nervous shock and loss of breath soon passed off, and he stood upon his feet, somewhat pale and a good deal shaky.

Phil ordered the march to be continued.

This day's journey—except the snake incident—was the counterpart of many others—very many—before a river was reached which they hoped and expected would lead them near the source of the Calabar River.

The river widened as they proceeded, and on the second day many villages were passed in spite of the frantic hospitality of the people, who paddled out in cockle shells of canoes, and tried to persuade the white men to land.

But the white men preferred not to.

The next day, however, there was a change in the aspect of affairs.

The river was calm as a lake, and blazed like a mirror with the sun upon it.

"What are these specks ahead?" shouted Temple, paddling up to the side of Phil.

"I was dozing. Where?"

"They don't want looking for."

"I see; send the guides forward to reconnoiter."

The guides came tearing back full of fright, crying:

"War canoes—war canoes!"

The river was literally covered with canoes.

Not in tens but in hundreds.

They lay scattered beyond these as far as the eye could reach.

On the banks women and children crowded, shouting and gesticulating, and the men rent the air with their cries.

The blockade was completed, and the expedition was brought to a sudden halt.

"What can be done?" asked Temple.

"Heaven knows," said Phil, despairingly. "They are moving to surround us, and resistance is useless."

CHAPTER XVII.

TAKING SUMMARY POSSESSION OF OUR EXPEDITION—DIPLOMACY—FALLEN AMONG THIEVES—THE POWER OF RUM
—A NIGHT ESCAPE—A COLLISION.

At the moment when a most disastrous and fatal collision seemed inevitable, it was averted by a singularly cool and happy action on the part of Edward Temple.

"Nothing like diplomacy," he said, loud enough for Phil to hear him, and not only opened and raised his imposing umbrella, but struck a light and began to smoke.

Phil, with the hot impetuosity of youth, was in the act of ordering his men to fire, that he might try the effect of intimidation, but observing the pacifying result of Temple's action, quietly dropped his own formidable weapon and caught up some strings of beads and a piece of crimson cloth, which he flaunted in the faces of those savages whom he rightly took to be chiefs.

At the same time he signed to his men to stop the canoe.

One canoe—conspicuous by its size and a stalwart savage bedecked with beads and metal ornaments, who stood in the prow and by angry gesticulations kept the other canoes at a distance—shot alongside our heroes.

The interpreters with Phil could not understand what was said to them.

However, the stalwart savage soon settled matters.

He spoke a few words to the men in his canoe.

Without warning, the canoes of the expedition were turned bows toward the land, and not only pushed to the water's edge, but dragged high up on the shore by the numberless natives who swarmed around their king.

The king, however, with an eye to future gains, drove his people back, and now—much to Phil's relief—a native was found who could talk with one of the men from Nauge Nauge—but still, only imperfectly.

The king invited the young explorers to his house, and gave every evidence of wishing to offer them hospitality and kindness.

The palaver was the longest and most tedious one inflicted upon our friends as yet.

The king could scarcely be made to understand why the expedition wished to force its way into unknown regions, and when at last some inkling of the—to him—foolish intentions of the whites was forced upon him, he gave a volume of reasons why it should not be attempted.

The people did not trade further inland.

Tribes of dwarfs, who embodied evil spirits, lurked in the forests. The rivers were poison, and serpents protected their mouths.

And considerably more to that effect.

"We had better tell him," said Temple, "that our own people are accustomed to live in houses on the banks of the river. I saw a line of huts where the shore forms a chain of little hills."

"Certainly," answered Phil, without waiting to ask Temple his reason.

The king, who was like a child with a new toy over his presents, readily acceded to the request, and the order was given to his people to see the white chiefs safely lodged.

When the stores were safely housed, and the expedition

lodged, Phil asked Temple why he wished to be near the river.

"The reason is simple enough. These powerful people—the most powerful in numbers we have yet met with outside Ashantee—would strip us of everything; a peaceable parting is out of the question; we must escape, somehow, under cover of the night."

The next day Phil, Temple, and Gascon impressed the natives pretty considerably with what they could do with their strange looking arms.

Some birds were shot on the wing at a great distance, and when the mangled bodies were picked up, the savages regarded them with as much awe as curiosity.

The third day being one for native festivities, the explorers agreed to make it the night for escape.

That night the rum was produced, and king, fetich men, and chiefs alike got drunk—fortunately for the expedition, on a very small quantity indeed.

The night favored them. The sky was as black as the river beneath.

The moment the savage orgies were over the natives of the expedition hurried back to their houses, got the stores out, and launched their canoes.

"Paddle—paddle!" cried Phil.

Temple and Gascon returned the cry. The canoes seemed to leap over the surface of the water then, and victory seemed assured, when a discovery was made; not that they were being pursued, but that canoes were darting out from the banks ahead to waylay them.

"No surrender this time," cried Phil.

The natives had already received instructions not to fire till ordered.

The crisis was at hand. The canoes of the savages barred their passage.

Only for an instant.

A crash, a multitude of cries from the water, and then dusky hands and brawny arms clinging to the gunwales of the expedition's canoes, relaxing their hold only when paddle or rifle butt fell crushingly upon their fingers or arms, and the canoes swept on.

A mile of racing speed and then a hurried disembarkation on the opposite shore.

While the carriers were shouldering their loads, others knocked holes in the bottom of the canoes—all but two—which were pushed into deep water and sank, filling almost instantly.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AT MANHATTAN TOWN.

"Where are we now, Phil?"

"Can't say, Temple, till we take the reckoning."

"Is Gascon able to continue the journey yet?"

"I hope so; will you see him?"

"Yes. No change while I was away?"

"None for the worse."

"Good."

It is many months since the young explorers made that night escape without losing a man.

Still they marched on, even when Gascon was stricken down with malaria—partly through his own indiscretion in overtasking his natural strength and constitution by an

injudicious use of spirituous liquors when he felt exhausted.

But they found a resting ground at last.

A grand and picturesque mountain range with a comparatively temperate climate, a wild and glorious landscape where flower gardens and vineyards were abundant.

Here they had built a permanent village which they called Manhattan Town, and the winding, limpid stream that ran zig-zag at its base, Franklin Creek.

Temple had been the first to propose to stay here until Tokio could fetch them a fresh supply of stores.

They walked side by side to the hut where Gascon lay on an improvised bed, which, at least, had the charm of being fragrant and pure.

Temple examined Gascon's condition, and found the fever to be breaking rapidly.

At midday the reckoning was taken. Phil looked surprised; Temple uttered an exclamation.

"Can we be right?" said Phil, looking at the sextant, doubtfully.

"Why not? That is all right. I make it that we have traveled too far east, and that this Franklin Creek is between twenty-three and twenty-four degrees east longitude."

"If that is so, we must march southwest, bearing considerably to the west, so as not to accidentally cross the equator."

"We shall not do that. Let us verify our reckoning."

They did. Temple excitedly exclaimed:

"We've got it, by jingo! Manhattan Town is lat. 3 N., long. 23-40 E., and now let us mark the spot and hand it down to posterity."

A sudden change came o'er the spirit of the scene at that moment.

Some rapid shots were fired down by the creek, and there arose a yelling that had not greeted our friends' ears for many a day.

Phil and Temple rushed out unarmed and started for the creek.

They had got just far enough to see Dayoko and some of his men being carried off bodily, when they, too, were surrounded and made prisoners before they could raise a hand to call upon their followers.

The first flash of bewilderment over, and Phil said quietly:

"Don't resist, Temple. They're half afraid of us already."

Temple laughed.

This somewhat startled the savages and they drew back a little way, and then held one of their noisy and bewildering pow-wows.

The next minute and Phil found himself at liberty, and the savages standing, looking on with open mouths, speechless with awe.

They literally shook as with the palsy.

Phil and Temple tracing this phenomenon to its source by following the direction of their eyes, saw Gascon staggering toward them, revolvers in hand, and eyes emitting sparks.

"Don't shoot," cried Phil to him.

By this time Dayoko had broken away with his men and began to lay about him with a club with startling agility and effect.

Phil stepped boldly forward and shook hands with the nearest and most terror-stricken of the savages.

Then a few beads—the remnant of his stock—more effectively reassured them.

"This is—halloo—'Temple, look!'"

Gascon had turned half-around, reeled and fallen heavily to the earth, and lay without a sign of life.

CHAPTER XIX.

LOSING HOPE.

Gascon soon became better, but was much weakened.

Phil gave very stern orders to Dayoko to keep the guards up to their work, and not to allow any crowding around the door.

The advent of these savages was a severe disappointment to Phil and Temple, who had fondly believed they were in an uninhabited part of Africa.

Phil and Temple were more than uneasy at the presence of those people in spite of their quiet and peaceful demeanor.

It entailed upon them caution and labor.

They must make Manhattan Town capable of defending them against a sudden surprise and attack.

At the same time, it would cause them to constantly watch the road of communication between here and the river Cameroons, for fear of Tokio and his carrier being intercepted with the stores.

Not an hour was lost in putting Manhattan Town in a state of defense, as far as their means would permit.

This work, which would probably last some weeks, kept them from brooding over their condition.

Scouts were constantly going out to look for and coming in to report signs of Tokio.

By degrees Gascon pulled through at the cost of the exhaustion of what little stock of luxuries and medicines they had left.

The savages who had come so unbiddingly loitered about the town, building themselves huts and stealing—as of course—any and everything not carefully hidden away or safely in the custody of its lawful owner.

They were joined in the most mysterious manner by their women and children, and settled down as if they had been invited by a special deputation.

However, they made themselves useful, and Phil, with excellent and commendable forethought and perseverance, made himself familiar with their dialect sufficiently well to be understood.

The men brought from the Gaboon, the Krumen and Fantis required even more sustenance than did the savages of the interior, yet even the wants of the men from the coast were as nothing in comparison to the absolute natural requirements of the whites.

They could not live on plantains and vegetables indigenous to this part of the continent.

Game was plentiful enough, but a surfeit of fresh meat means scurvy and even worse.

Thus we find them seven weeks after the opening of this chapter in a weary and emaciated condition.

Gascon, with scarcely strength to walk, Phil looking like a ~~scurvy~~ ^{scurvy}, and beginning to lose all interest in the future, and the young doctor, who had taxed his botanical lore to the utmost to try and create substitutes for salt, lime juice, bread, or even potatoes, rice, or other nourishing cereals,

found his knowledge inadequate, and when at last the gun-powder gave out—which they had been using for salt—the three noble fellows gave up all hope of living through this ordeal.

The fever season set in, typhus broke out among the coast tribes, and not only was the doctor without the means of helping them beyond certain sanitary precautions, but he found himself too weak to continue the rounds.

Here, then, must they end the most magnificent feat, the most hazardous and grandest achievement in African travel.

Besieged by relentless want, walled in by malignant diseases, no wonder hope fled at last.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FETICH MEN.

Since the customs and habits of the unsophisticated African have been known to civilization, the one most peculiar and revolting of the civilized mind is the manner of putting the aged and feeble out of the way.

None but able-bodied infants are allowed a lease of life in Africa.

Never till now did Temple thoroughly understand native philosophy on these points.

When the typhus spread from their own followers to the savages, the fetich men, finding they could not cure, killed them and got them out of the way, and under the ground.

That was their notion of sanitary laws.

As the sufferers, themselves, made no complaint, and seemed to think that it was all right and proper, poor Temple was saved much mental anguish, for he could not attend upon them even had they been willing.

"Phil," he said, one day, when the moral gloom had deepened over Manhattan Town, "do you see a change in the people who came here?"

"Pretty much such as I see in our own and in ourselves."

"No—not that; a worse one—much worse; for while there is life there is hope."

"I don't understand you."

"They shun us. They avoid us when we go near them."

"Yes, I have noticed that."

"And their looks and gestures. Their lowered voices and threatening scowls."

"Yes."

"Well, my friend, we must exert ourselves: we must be careful that none of our pots or kettles are tampered with; we must watch closely that they do not meddle with the stream whence our drinking water comes."

"Good heavens, Temple, what do you mean?"

"That they know more than I do. That they can make and are making deadly poisons out of plants whose very existence I am ignorant of."

"But why? They can gain nothing by that."

"Can't you see that since the epidemic broke out among us they have suspected us to be evil spirits who have bewitched them?"

"Temple, this is too preposterous."

"Is it? Wait and see—only be advised."

Phil fairly collapsed at this.

In their weakened condition, to have the perpetual fears

ror of being poisoned at any moment, was more than human nature could consistently bear.

Dayoko had fortunately escaped the dreadful malady, as many of the Krumen and M'pongwes had, and showed himself to be indefatigable in his attention to our hero and his friends.

Besides, while being no less smart than Tokio, he had mastered the dialect of these people, and now by singular coincidence he came rushing in while Phil and Temple were talking.

He looked wild with terror.

"What now, Dayoko?"

"Mr. Faraday, Mr. Temple, sir, I hear dreadful palaver."

"What about?"

"You—dose niggers tink you ebil spirit. They say you bewitch dem people. Dey make fetich poison for you—for true, sir."

"I did not expect a verification of my suspicions quite so soon," said Temple, aghast.

"What had better be done?"

"You can speak with them better than I can. Let us put on our side arms, and though our guns are empty, they will look imposing. We must turn the tables on them."

"What, poison——"

"No—no," interrupted Temple, with a smile; "but we can tell them we believe they brought the epidemic here. They must clear out and take their sick with them."

"But you don't think they'll quit with their sick?"

"We must make them."

"You are right, Temple, we will."

They called some of their men around with all the available weapons that did not require powder, and with all the dignity of bearing their weakened condition could command, they marched to the house of the fetich men, and sent a messenger to summon them out.

The fetich men only came as far as the threshold, and Phil and Temple went forward and greeted them.

Phil said he wished to hold palaver.

He stated their mission. He said he and his people had let them live in peace—that they had brought disease into the colony and must leave.

The fetich men were staggered.

Phil continued, and what he said now staggered them even more.

The whites were great fetich people, and there was one of the greatest—pointing to Temple—who knew people's thoughts and hearts.

He had seen through a spirit into their hearts, and knew they were making poison to kill his people.

What would they say if he called fire and thunder down from the heavens?

"And destroy you all here," he added. "But the white fetich man is good and not cruel; we will spare you, but you must leave here and go back to your own country—palaver said."

This bowled the fetich men completely over.

One spoke quaveringly:

"They had many sick, how could they move them?"

"Palaver said," was the cold and unrelenting response.

Then, as though the silent fetich man—Temple—had been invoking the aid of the Great Spirit, a perfect roar of musketry burst upon the air, echoing far and wide.

The savages rolled upon the earth in helpless and deadly terror, while Phil's men, Phil and Temple, sent up a ringing shout:

"Tokio—Tokio!"

Then Phil called:

"Follow me, Tokio is in danger."

"Tokio!" fairly screamed the happy fellows, and they turned to a man and followed their gallant young leader, who was imbued with new life.

CHAPTER XXI.

ON THE MARCH.

The joy of the explorers at the welcome sounds of the rifles made them a little reckless, inasmuch as they never stayed to think of the most likely cause of this rapid firing.

They might have had to face a powerful host already barring the progress of the faithful Tokio.

The sequel fortunately proved that alarm would have been groundless.

Tokio explained that he had lost his way—that he had fired single shots at frequent intervals, hoping to hear a reply from the colony.

Not hearing any, and still being in a wooded part of the mountain range, he told his men to fire a salvo of blank cartridges.

Phil, with a sad smile, explained the reason why he could not reply to this signal.

"We used the last of our gunpowder for salt," he said. Tokio was distressed.

He explained that he ought to have reached the colony before—only that twice he lost his way, and on three occasions a fight was forced upon him.

However, he came through, having suffered only a few casualties, and so rejoined the disease-stricken remnant of the expedition with eighty-four sturdy and healthy followers.

"The medicine chest. Where is it?" asked Temple, to whom every moment of delay was an hour of torture.

"All good, for true, Mr. Temple, sir," answered Tokio.

"And the ammunition?" asked Phil.

"Plenty, Mr. Faraday, sir."

"Oh, parbleu—and the cognac, my gentle but dusky friend—the cognac?"

Phil started at hearing the voice of Gascon so near them.

The brave fellow had heard the firing—had asked for Phil and Temple and followed them.

"Let us get to the settlement," said Temple, quietly.

"These people had better camp on the mountainside near Franklin Creek—we must confine the sick to one place."

Temple was in an agony of suspense now, and out of deference to him Phil began the march sooner than he otherwise would.

Five weeks later they came upon a splendid tract of country, with herds of cattle, verdure of the richest kind, and foliage as varied and beautiful as any on the banks of the Hudson.

Here they camped, but sent scouts to scour the country for signs of any inhabitants.

The next day large tribes were reported fifteen miles away.

Temple listened with interest to these reports, and looked fixedly at Phil.

"We will pay them a visit to-morrow," he said.

"Yes, and in the meantime the scouts can return and survey the town," answered Temple.

"Do you not think it would be sensible to fire a few salvos in the air?"

"It would perhaps serve to bring a few of the strangers into our hands," Temple replied, thoughtfully, "and should we be near, and should poor Algy be alive, the sound would answer the poor boy's messages like a voice from heaven."

The salvos were fired at five minute intervals, and another at sunset.

At sunrise another salvo was fired, and after breakfast the march was continued.

Signs of intruders on the night before were seen in several places, and which caused the explorers to push forward with their fighting men on the *qui vive* for any surprise, and guarding the carriers.

A distance of ten miles had been completed without interruption, and Phil was consulting Temple as to the expediency of ordering a halt, when the advance guard were seen to come to a dead stand, and deploy into fighting line.

They were in a valley, and along the whole line of hills above and before them swarmed file upon file of stalwart savages.

There was a moment's ominous pause.

Then arose deafening shouts and yells, accompanied almost immediately by a cloud of arrows and spears.

They were fired down with fatal accuracy and effect, and many of the explorers' hardy followers fell to rise no more.

Phil's face was scarlet with anger. The order was given to return fire.

The first volley brought the savages down like crows.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE MISSIONARY.

We must convey the reader into the heart of these people, whose numbers the scouts had reported to be countless.

Their houses were neatly built, and located with an eye to sanitary advantages and a domestic comfort beyond that of even the Ashantees.

The men wore nothing but a piece of skin or grass cloth around the loins.

But the chiefs and king had a vast number of necklaces formed of ivory beads, teeth, iron bracelets, and a sort of short skirt of well-prepared skin.

A cross-belt of the same material supported a heavy broad-bladed knife, which dangled at their right hip, while their spears were tipped with sharp iron barbs, and looked exceedingly formidable.

On the evening when the scout from the explorers' camp reconnoitered the town a scene escaped his eyes that would have considerably startled him had he penetrated far enough in to witness it.

Near the king's house, and surrounded by the king and his counselors, stood a figure remarkable for its distinction from the rest.

It was that of a tall and slender young man, whose

face was ornamented with a light, flowy beard; whose hair hung long and wavy down his neck, and scarcely confined by a pith hat, rudely shaped to shade the eyes.

He wore sandals and a robe of neatly-woven grass cloth, a girdle around his waist, and a book clasped in his right hand, which was raised imposingly above his head.

He was evidently exhorting the chiefs to forego some barbarous custom of theirs; one of their rites—a human sacrifice.

He spoke eloquently in their own tongue, but evidently with no effect.

"You detain me," he said, "a prisoner, though you wish to make me your head priest and medicine man. You believe in my fetich? How can you, when you will not be led by me?"

"If the Supreme Being whom you worship and fear sent me to you for the good of your people, why do you not listen to me, or let me find my way back to my people?"

"You are a great fetich man," answered the king. "God sent you to us, and He would punish us if we cast you out. You taught us to make houses, to make arms, and to cure our wounds, and to rear our children; but you were not sent to change our ancient customs. If we make no sacrifices the spirits of our ancestors will come back and bring curses upon us. We are good to you. My people fear you, but I am a king."

"Hear me; be guided by me, or my people will come. God will send them to me, or He will take me away from you; then beware of the evil fetich spirits that will come and blight your people. Hark—hark!"

Then he suddenly broke out in English:

"Oh, Heavenly Father, hast Thou heard and answered my prayer? or hath it pleased You to bring upon me an hallucination?"

The din and distant rattle of musketry broke the stillness of the hills, and came to him in a hundred echoes.

"I am answered," he said, in the native tongue. "That is the sound of my people's fire-weapons. Listen."

Twice more the echoes came and died away, and all was still.

The king and his chiefs were thrown into a state of consternation.

Scouts were dispatched in all directions to discover the cause of the "thunder echoes," and told that if they failed to bring news to expect death.

Then a long consultation was held among the medicine men, and glances were cast at the young priest that were a strange mixture of awe and distrust.

The fetich men surrounded him.

With beating heart, yet almost doubting his ears, he went to his house.

Here he shut himself in, lighted his lamps, and sat down in deep meditation.

He sat by a rustic table, and opened the book he had never laid aside through all his trials and dangers—his Bible.

But for this he would have been feverish and excited when the sun rose, instead of calmly hopeful, though resigned.

What was that—a mere fancy? No; he was too collected to be the victim of a delusion.

The same echoes as of the previous night.

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Others must have heard them, too, for already the people were rushing about, talking excitedly with each other in a scared sort of way.

An hour later the scouts sent out on the previous evening came in.

They asked palaver with the king.

The poor captive waylaid some of them and questioned them.

The answer was decidedly unsatisfactory.

"People from dark country," was all the answer he could get.

Then he grew angry and tried to see the king.

The king excused himself.

At the same time the chiefs were assuming their war accoutrements. The native drums were being sounded and the warriors flocking to arms.

Meantime, the captive waited till the king came out in full "state."

"Wherefore," asked he, "do you send your warriors to people who come to you with peace in their hearts and perhaps bring you presents from the far-off countries?"

"Who knows that they come to us in peace? They want to drive us away from our country and make my people slaves—why would they travel here if not for gain?"

"Let me go forward before your warriors and I will see and speak with these people!"

"No. They would take you away or kill you. Then God would be angry and frown. We cannot let you go. But my people shall not fight if the strangers look peaceful and tell their wants."

While the palaver was being held, the warriors, headed by their chiefs, had marched out of the town headed by the scouts.

The captive wrung his hands in agony.

"I must be patient," he muttered; "surely some opportunity will enable me to get away from here, but I must avoid arousing suspicion."

An opportunity did occur.

The day had not more than half gone when scouts came pouring in with the wildest terror depicted in their faces.

Some were wounded and bleeding, and all without arms.

Their forces had been scattered, they said. More warriors must be sent or the strange people would march upon their town.

The king, furious and alarmed, sent out reinforcements.

A delay of two hours, then a renewal of the firing was heard and gradually nearing the town.

Scouts were constantly coming in, bringing news, until a number of them returned helter-skelter and crying that the enemy was marching on the town and driving their people before them.

The women, old men and children, prepared to flee, and even the king trembled.

Now the young captive's time had come.

"Follow me," he said. "I will meet those powerful people—one word from me will bring peace. Come."

With nothing but his book in his hand he hurried with the fastness of a deer to where the fight was raging most furiously.

As he passed the ranks of his own people he ordered them to retire and cease fighting.

Hurrying on all the while, he found himself opposed only by the invading force.

How his heart thrilled when he beheld three white, flushed and stern faces at the head of the natives.

He held up his arms in token of a truce.

Then he cried loudly and hysterically:

"Oh, my countrymen, fight no more—shed no more blood!"

Temple hurled down his rifle and marched forward with a gasp of joy.

"Can this be Algernon?"

"Edward! Brother! Found at last!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

A LETTER FROM PHIL FARADAY TO ED. KING.

I entirely concur with you, friend King, that the climax of the chapter in which Temple finds his brother seems the natural conclusion to the story of dramatic incident you have written out of my brief notes.

We felt ourselves that the expedition had fulfilled its mission when we came upon poor young Temple.

We felt, somehow, that the journey was over, yet we had more ground to cover—as hazardous a task before us, and as much unexplored country as we had already passed through.

The turbulent king of these people (whose name I failed to give through an accident hereafter described) was appeased with some handsome presents, added to which the lesson we had given him made him a very firm ally.

While camping here the heavy rains set in, accompanied by a cyclone.

While it lasted it was impossible for any of the expedition to venture out of doors, unless driven out for fear of the house being blown down upon them.

At Algernon Temple's request, we had located ourselves on the hills. The houses built under the instruction of Algernon Temple were as strong as those built by Europeans, excepting one.

That contained, with other valuable stores, all my implements. That one was blown down, scattered, swept into nothingness, and a long and tedious search only discovered what I had expected from the first.

My sextant, barometer, thermometer, artificial horizons, in fact, all my scientific instruments for taking observations were gone or broken.

My compass and chronometer were all I had left to guide us on our way and fix locations, which, of course, had to be done by guesswork.

Three weeks after the loss of all my scientifics we started for the return journey—crossing the equator at 17-54 E. long., and steering S. S. W.

Eight months in all was consumed in this fearful pilgrimage. I will not enter into the details which, after all, are but a repetition of those you have already so admirably told.

Sickness, disheartening delays, and opposition from the natives, numberless petty battles, interminable forests and loathsome streams, rendered us so impoverished in blood and stamina, in food, medicines, and all that was necessary

to our actual existence, that we arrived on the shore of the South Atlantic little better than a regiment of lepers; dysentery, ulcers and typhoid fever were our chief characteristics.

The brief and painful story of Algernon Temple's sufferings I inclose in his own words, as for brevity and modesty they are so entirely characteristic of him.

"Dahomey," Algernon said, "was not the last place I was seen in. I left there for Lake Victoria, and afterward traveled inland, east and north.

"My efforts at reforming the tribes I met with were all but fruitless. I grew faint-hearted but still went on.

"Presently I fell in with a roaming tribe from the Abyssinian borders. They made me prisoner and took me still further into the interior; bartered me to the first tribe they met for ivory or slaves, and so I was passed on till I reached a tribe who treated me very kindly in their way, but made me march many weeks, day and night, until with much ceremony, I was led before King Galtee, with whom you found me. I was literally sold to him, at a high price, too, the tribes having lately been at war. Those who sold me represented that I was a great spirit man sent from across the big waters, and that as long as they kept me and did not go to war with the tribe that sold me they would have good fetich, plenty of ivory, game and cattle, good houses to live in—for I would teach them to build—firearms to fight with, light all the time, and so forth. King Galtee took me. I tried with all my heart and soul to convert him and his people. I failed. I taught them to build beautiful houses and many other artifices. They prized me so much that they feared to lose me. It was the love that kills. Their love for me caused them to make me a prisoner. The rest you know."

I intend at some future date to write out all that I discovered concerning the physical geography of the country I explored. However, this may be or may not be, and thanking you for the able manner in which you have put our trials and sufferings before the youth of my own loved country—excepting you made me a little too prominent—and also with a feeling of thankfulness to Him who guided us through and reunited those two noble young fellows, the Temple brothers, and took dear, light-hearted Gascon to sunny France, I conclude with best wishes, and hope that we shall meet again.

Yours ever,

PHIL FARADAY.

THE END.

Read "THE DARK CORNERS OF NEW YORK: OR, THE PERILS OF A DISTRICT TELEGRAPH MESSENGER," which will be the next number (?) of "All Around Weekly."

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CHOICE READING MATTER.

Small John had arranged to go to a Sunday-school picnic. Jumping out of bed early he ran to the window to see what the weather was like, and found the rain coming down in torrents. Stamping his foot angrily he exclaimed: "I'm going to be a heathen after this."

Spanning 274 feet and over 300 feet high, a natural bridge, said to be the largest known, has been discovered by members of the Utah Archaeological Society, which has returned from an expedition along the Colorado River in Northern Arizona and Southern Utah. The bridge is four miles north of the Arizona line in Utah, six miles east of the Colorado River. On its top were found imbedded several fossils of remarkable size, indicating the presence in earlier times of giant animal life.

The French battleship Jena, which a few years ago was wrecked by an explosion of the smokeless powder in her magazines, is being used as a target, and several important problems are to be determined relating to the effect of shell fire. Recently, after caged animals had been placed on board the ship, she was attacked by the cruiser Latouche Trouville with high explosive shells. The deadly effect of the gases of the explosion was shown by the asphyxiation of several of the animals.

Jumbo, a horse owned by a Savin Rock shipbuilder, is said to be the largest horse in Connecticut, and it would no doubt be safe to say, the largest in New England. He is nearly seven feet high and weighs 1,700 pounds. He is a most powerful animal, and has dragged with apparent ease a two-ton load. With the children he is a great favorite. It costs a good deal to feed him, as he has the almost incredible quantity of eight pecks of oats at each meal and makes away with over two hundred pounds of hay every week. His shoes are of unusual size and weigh four pounds each.

The railroads of the United States have ever been famous for the great size and carrying capacity of their rolling stock. Nowhere in the world are such heavy passenger and freight trains hauled as in this country. Not long ago a train 3,000 feet long, containing 85 cars loaded with 4,451 tons of coal, was hauled from Altoona to Enola, Pa. Trial was made to determine what loads could be moved over the middle division, where the maximum grade has recently been cut down to 0.2 per cent. The train was hauled for 124 miles at an average speed of 17 miles per hour by a single freight locomotive.

The longevity of olive trees is extraordinary. In Syria recently have been found some remarkably ancient olive trees whose ages are established beyond question. A trust deed exists which relates to an orchard covering 490 trees near Tripoli, Syria, the trust deed having been issued 499 years ago. Though the trees look aged they still bear fruit of fine quality in abundance and are likely to maintain their productiveness for many hundreds of years yet. An olive grove near Beirut is admitted to be the third largest olive farm in the world. Syrian fruit farms are extending olive culture with much zeal and effect. One planter recently set out 300,000 trees in a block for commercial purposes. Under European systems of culture the Syrians make the olive tree bear each season, while in the old days one crop in three years was thought to be all that the trees could produce. The low cropping capacity of the trees was due to the native method of thrashing the fruits from the branches with sticks, which seriously injured them. The methods of grinding the olives for oil and picking the fruit are peculiar. Neither the grinders nor pickers receive wages, but are paid on percentage. The pickers receive five per cent. of the actual fruit picked and the grinders get ten per cent. of the fruit ground.

RIB TICKLERS.

"Since it is all over between us, Miss Berkenhead," said the young man, pale but calm, "I am compelled to ask for the return of the numerous and costly presents I have given you from time to time during the last six months, under the mistaken idea that I was your accepted lover and you were my affianced wife." "No, Henry," she answered, "you can't claim them now. All you can do is to give me the necessary sixty days' notice. By that time—er—perhaps confidence will be restored."

A Brooklyn woman recently took her Irish domestic to task touching the dusty condition of the chairs in her reception-room. For a moment the Celt was taken aback, but she quickly recovered. Running her thumb along the seat of one of the chairs she regarded it closely. "Don't it beat all, mum," queried she, "the difference it makes to have nobody sit in 'em jist the wan day, mum? If it weren't for the visitors, mum," she continued, "I'd have to be at thim chairs all the toime wid me cloth!"

Magistrate—It's very disgraceful that you should beat your wife. Prisoner—Well, your honor, she aggrawated me by keepin' on sayin' she'd 'ave me hup afore that bald-headed hold. humbug, meanin' yer honor. Magistrate—You're discharged.

Mrs. Sweetface—"Is your daughter happily married?" Mrs. Sourface—"Indeed, she is. She's got a husband who's as 'fraid as death of her."

They had seated themselves at a lunch counter. "What are you going to eat?" asked the doctor. "Clam chowder," answered the professor. "What for?" The professor thoughtfully stroked his beard. "I want to see if I can't get everything they've got here in short order," he said, looking at the doctor out of the corner of his eye.

"I can't understand," said the doctor, after the operation had been performed and the patient had been prepared for burial, "how your husband was able to live, with such an affliction as he had." "Well, you see," replied the sorrowing widow, "it was years and years before we could persuade him to go on the operating table."

Bleak Cliff

By John Sherman.

Den Wiley's name is a strange one to American readers, and yet he is a well-known English detective, and any of the Scotland Yard men will tell you about him.

Den was for years a government detective.

He was for most of the time attached to the coast-guard service as a detector of smugglers and the like.

At the Centennial I had the pleasure to meet Mr. Wiley, and heard the following narrative from his lips:

Bleak Cliff, on the English Channel, opposite the French coast, is as barren, desolate and lonely a spot as one often finds on the shores of Old England.

Years ago I met with a peculiar adventure there.

It came about in this wise:

At the time I was a detective of the coast-guard service.

Smuggling was then regularly carried on between England and France, and much capital and many bands of unscrupulous men were engaged in the illegal business, for, if they were successful, their profits were enormous.

For a long time the neighborhood of Bleak Cliff had been suspected to be a favorite landing-place for the smugglers.

The coast guard had a station thereabouts, but, strange to say, they had never captured the daring smugglers who visited that portion of the British coast.

Four detectives had been sent there to investigate the matter and detect and capture the smugglers, but although they had some two score men of the coast guard at their backs, they never succeeded.

These men, the detectives, were not all sent at one time, but at different periods.

Three of them returned alive, and their reports were singularly constrained and unimportant.

One of the detectives never returned, and his fate was a mystery.

The Government superintendent of the coast marine finally sent me to Bleak Cliff.

By my special request he kept the fact of my going there a profound secret, even from the coast guards.

I made myself up like an artist as far as possible, and laden with the traps of a gentleman of the studios, I set out for Bleak Cliff one fine summer's day, little thinking what a strange two-fold mystery I should discover, or what adventures would befall me.

Back at a distance of something like a mile from Bleak Cliff, which was a steep declivity extending for miles along the coast, stood an old mansion, which had been permitted to fall into decay.

Two miles north, close to the sea, were the quarters and offices of the shore patrol or coast guards.

One day, not long after my arrival at the little hamlet of Bleak Cliff, situated a league south of the old mansion, as I was strolling along the brow of the beetling cliff, I met a fine-looking gentleman of middle age, who was leading a saddle-horse.

At sight of me he came to a halt.

I paused, for I saw that he was about to address me.

"Good-day, sir," he said in a pleasant and gentlemanly way.

I responded to his salutation in the same spirit.

"You are the artist of whom I have heard the fishermen of the village speak?"

"Yes, sir."

"I am Jacob Hollbrook, the resident of the mansion yonder."

"Indeed! I am pleased to meet you, sir."

"The pleasure is mutual, and I would like to engage you to do a little work for me, if portrait-painting is in your line."

Now, I am really a fair artist; I had a natural taste for the work, and particularly portraits.

Circumstances of a pecuniary nature had caused me to abandon the profession of an artist years before, after having acquired a knowledge of the business.

Acting upon an impulse which I could scarcely have explained at the time, even to myself, I said:

"I do portraits, and I would like to do one for you. Were you thinking of having your portrait painted?"

"No; that of a young lady—my ward. If you are not engaged, I would like you to accompany me home, and then you can make arrangements with Elenora for the necessary sittings."

I accompanied Mr. Hollbrook home.

There he presented me to an angelically lovely girl—one of those delicate beauties who seem almost too ethereal.

Miss Elenora Bandair was the young lady's name, and she was an orphan and the heiress of a small fortune, which would come to her when she was of age, but was until that time to be held in trust for her by her guardian.

All this I only learned after a number of sittings, when I had become well acquainted with the young lady.

There was an air of sadness and unrest about the girl, and she seemed to regard her guardian with positive fear.

Sometimes, when he approached her, I saw an expression of horror come into her eyes, and she would draw away from him, as though the thought of contact with him was repulsive to her.

I was not long in arriving at the conclusion that there was a mystery in the household of "Bleak Cliff Manor"—that was the name of the old mansion.

But what was the skeleton in the closet?

I was fated to discover later.

I had been at Bleak Cliff for two weeks, and despite the fact that I had striven in every way to find out some of the secrets of the smugglers, I was as ignorant on that subject as when I first came there.

One evening, while I was at Bleak Cliff Manor painting on the picture, a terrible storm came up, and Mr. Hollbrook invited me to remain over night.

I accepted the invitation at once.

The storm raged for hours, and when, near midnight, I fell asleep in the apartment that had been assigned me, it was at its height.

I know not how long I slept.

Perhaps it was for hours.

Suddenly I awoke.

I was in an instant as wide awake as I ever was in my life.

I started up in bed.

A thrilling sight met my eyes.

At the foot of the bed stood six masked men and, despite his mask, I recognized one of them as my host, Mr. Hollbrook.

Six pistols were aimed at my head.

My eyes protruded with astonishment, and I know I was the picture of surprise, for I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror.

"We have found you out. We know you are a detective in pursuit of the smugglers, thanks to a letter you dropped at the inn in the village," said Hollbrook, sternly.

I thought my hour had come.

I presumed they meant to murder me, and, of course, I understood that my host was in league with the smugglers.

"What do you mean to do about it?" I asked, with an assumption of bravado.

"You must take an oath of secrecy, and swear to leave the place, never to return, and we will spare your life, as we did the lives of three of the four other detectives sent against us, who took the oath and gave the promise we require of you."

"And if I refuse?"

"Then you die, as one of the four detectives of whom I told you who refused to take the oath died."

"Speak—will you promise?"

"Give me until morning to decide."

"Very well. But I warn you think not of escape, for you will find it impossible."

I was allowed to dress.

Then my foes conducted me to a cell in the cellar and left me.

I had not been in the cellar long when I heard a strange noise in the wall.

Presently one of the large rocks of which the wall was composed was pushed aside, and a light appeared.

Then in the opening of the wall I saw the pale and worn, but handsome face of a young man.

"Are you, too, a prisoner?" he asked.

"Yes."

"So am I. Why are you here?"

"Because the smugglers have discovered that I am a detective."

"Then I will save you."

"Thank you; but how can you?"

"I will tell you. The young lady of the house has for a long time known I was a prisoner here, although her guardian does not know she holds his secret. We have learned to love each other. In half an hour she will open the door of my cell. She will fly with me, and you shall accompany us. Before Elenora discovered me I loosened the stone I have pushed in my efforts to escape. I knew you must be a captive, and I determined to save you. Come into my cell."

I crawled through the opening in the wall.

Presently Elenora came and opened the door of the cell, having taken the key from Hollbrook while he slept.

Three minutes' walk took us beyond the grounds.

Suddenly a bright light flashed in our faces, and we were confronted by two of the smugglers.

I leaped at one of them and knocked him senseless.

The other was bearing the young man to the ground.

The smuggler had drawn a knife, and he was about to plunge it into the heart of the young man.

Before I could reach him, Elenora, brave girl as she was, clutched the villain's arm.

The young man was saved, for I planted a tremendous blow between his antagonist's eyes that stretched him out senseless beside the other scoundrel.

Then we hastened to the office of the coast guard.

A company of the coast guards and myself hastened back to the manor house.

The smugglers I had left senseless had recovered, and warned Hollbrook of our escape.

He was preparing to leave the house, but we captured him and several of his men.

Then he and his men eventually made a full confession, and we found a secret cavern in the cliff, into which a schooner could be run and unloaded.

The band was broken up for good.

That night the young man, whose name was Paul Levantour, made the following explanation of how he came to be a captive in the hands of the smuggler chief:

"My father was a widower, and I was his only child. We resided in Havre, France. My father married a woman who

had a son nearly my own age, and we bore quite a resemblance to each other.

"My father sent my foster-brother, Duval Harcour, and I to England to attend a university for four years. We had completed our studies, and were about to return home, when Duval proposed that we should visit his uncle—his mother's brother, who is Jacob Hollbrook. I assented, and we came to Bleak Cliff Manor. We arrived at dead of night, and Hollbrook and Duval suddenly seized me, bound and gagged me, and placed me in the cell in the cellar.

"Before I was placed there, I learned from the conversation of the two villains that my step-mother and Duval had plotted that I should be gotten out of the way, and that Duval should return home and claim to be myself!

"He was to tell my father that Duval was drowned while bathing at Bleak Cliff.

"Then my father was to be poisoned by my demoniac step-mother, and she and her son hoped by their plot to secure all my poor father's vast fortune."

Elenora said she had long suspected her guardian's real character, and feared and despised him.

That she had resolved to run away, even before she discovered Paul.

I was deeply interested in Paul's story.

I determined to aid him in turning the tables on his demoniac step-mother and her son.

I accompanied Paul and Elenora to Havre.

Paul, at my suggestion, went in disguise.

We found Paul's father suffering from a mysterious malady, and learned that the physicians had pronounced his case as absolutely hopeless.

Paul visited his father as one of the physician's assistants, and obtained a sample of the medicine he was taking.

It was examined, and found to contain a slow but deadly poison.

The time had come to make himself known, but we wished to catch the female assassin in the act; and so, while Paul and a couple of officers concealed themselves under the window of the invalid's room, I entered it as stealthily as a burglar by means of a skeleton key, while Paul's father was alone and asleep.

Presently the poisoner, the poor man's own heartless wife, came in. I had concealed myself behind the curtains of the bed, near a stand covered with bottles.

The woman approached the stand, and having satisfied herself that her intended victim slept, she produced a vial of poison, and was about to pour its contents into the medicine of the invalid when I sprang out and seized her.

She shrieked for help.

Duval, her son, rushed into the room, and seeing his mother struggling with me, he whipped out a pistol and aimed it at my head.

At the same moment Paul dashed through the window and struck up Duval's arm just as he pulled the trigger. The bullet whizzed by my head, but I was unharmed.

The officer seized Duval, and he and his mother were taken to prison.

The evidence against them was conclusive, and they were punished according to law.

Paul had no difficulty in establishing his identity.

The young man's father rapidly recovered when the poisoned medicine was no longer taken, and when he was himself once more Paul and Elenora were married.

It was discovered that the scoundrel Hollbrook had squandered Elenora's inheritance, but as Paul possessed wealth enough for a dozen, she did not miss her lost fortune.

When I returned to England I had a present of five hundred pounds in my possession, given me by Paul.

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